$3.80
SOCCER TODAY
636715800001
230302 3

Soccer Today!

$A3.80
INC GST
21 MARCH
2002

$A4.80
inc GST
IN WEST
AUSTRALIA

VOLUME 1
No. 10

DISTRIBUTION BY WRAPAWAY
(02) 9550 1622
PRODUCED BY ROYAL PUBLISHING
(02) 9588 6533
royal_publishing@yahoo.com.au

Meet Rachel, our latest Sharkette profile

Inside: Trans Tasman Adventures - On the road with the Power
Pages 16-17

Power's Ahmad Elrich takes off

Produced weekly by Royal Publishing

Parramatta

Power

VS

Sydney United

Saturday 23 March 7.30pm

Parramatta Stadium

Youth League at 5pm (Gates open 4.45pm) Tickets available from Ticketek (inside Parramatta Leagues) or at the gate

Wayne O'Sullivan

Proudly supported by

Switch onto

POWER Credit Union

PARRAMATTA LEAGUES

Sydney's best in the heart of the west

Parramatta Power

It's a whole new ball game!

football elite
revolutionary new soccer programme
fbelite.com
michael 0414584770
michael@fbelite.com

No major National League reform planned for next season

By Guy Hand

THE troubled National Soccer League looks certain to limp into next season without any major changes.

NSL Commission chairman Remo Nogarotto admitted on Monday that extensive reform of the league won't happen before the 2003-04 season.

But he said the league was considering adding or dumping a team to even the numbers in the current 13-team competition for next season.

Nogarotto blamed the impasse between Soccer Australia and its estranged marketing partner IEC for the inability to radically overhaul the NSL for 2002-03.

"For the first time there's absolute consensus that things must change and absolute consensus that the league as it stands is unsustainable," said Nogarotto, a long-time advocate of NSL reform before taking the helm of the NSL Commission.

"It's profoundly disappointing that we're not able to translate that into the changes that we know are so desperately needed."

Nogarotto said he had been putting pressure on Soccer Australia's board to resolve the IEC issue as quickly as possible for the good of the game.

All NSL clubs are losing money, attendances at all clubs except Perth and Newcastle have fallen and corporate interest in the league is at an all-time low.

Now it seems the only change - if any - to be made to the NSL next year will be numerical rather than the radical overhaul all in Australian soccer believe it needs.

Nogarotto said it was unlikely the league would stay at 13 teams for next season, with a 14th team the most likely option.

But he admitted cutting a team could be a possibility - though with several NSL clubs feeling the financial pinch, any decision to cull a team may be made for Soccer Australia.

"Everyone agrees we can't have an uneven competition," Nogarotto said.

"But we're not just going to include a 14th team to make up the numbers.

"Any change must be a precursor to what happens beyond next season.

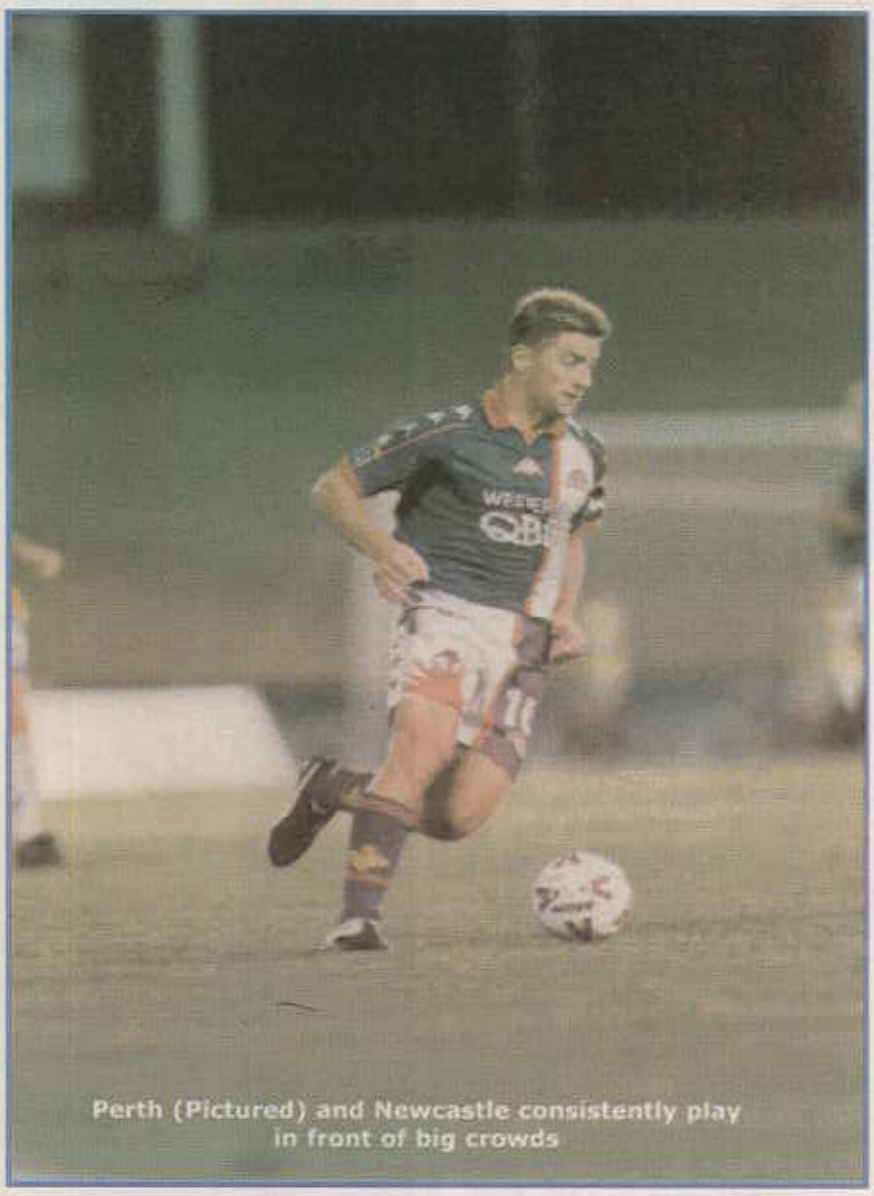
"So rationalisation is an option."

The front-runners to be the NSL's 14th team are cashed-up Queensland club Brisbane Lions, based in Brisbane's south-west, and South Australian State League side Adelaide Galaxy.

The Galaxy is bankrolled by Adelaide property developer Con Makris.

Nogarotto said a final decision on the shape of next season's NSL would be made by the end of next month.

That would also signal a convenient point for any existing financially-strapped NSL clubs to drop out for next season.



Perth (Pictured) and Newcastle consistently play in front of big crowds

SOCCER TODAY - available at newsagencies every Thursday

Farina not impressed by Victorian attitude

AUSTRALIA coach Frank farina is stunned by the Victorian Soccer Federation's negative reaction to his plan plan to have his home-based Socceroos play on loan with the state's Premier League clubs to stay match-fit.

Farina wants his squad in shape for July's Oceania Nations' Cup and had hoped the VSF - and the other states - would agree to his proposal.

"We haven't been told anything officially but I'd be disappointed if Victoria wasn't supportive of the national team," Farina told the Herald-Sun newspaper.

"We've got enough people sinking the boot in (from outside soccer).

"I would expect people inside the game to help."

But VSF president Manny Galanos blasted the idea.

"It's absolute nonsense," Galanos said.

"He (Farina) doesn't understand the ramifications of what he is proposing.

"If you get five or six players and give out one each to six clubs, it will be have a huge effect on who makes the Premier League finals and who gets relegated.

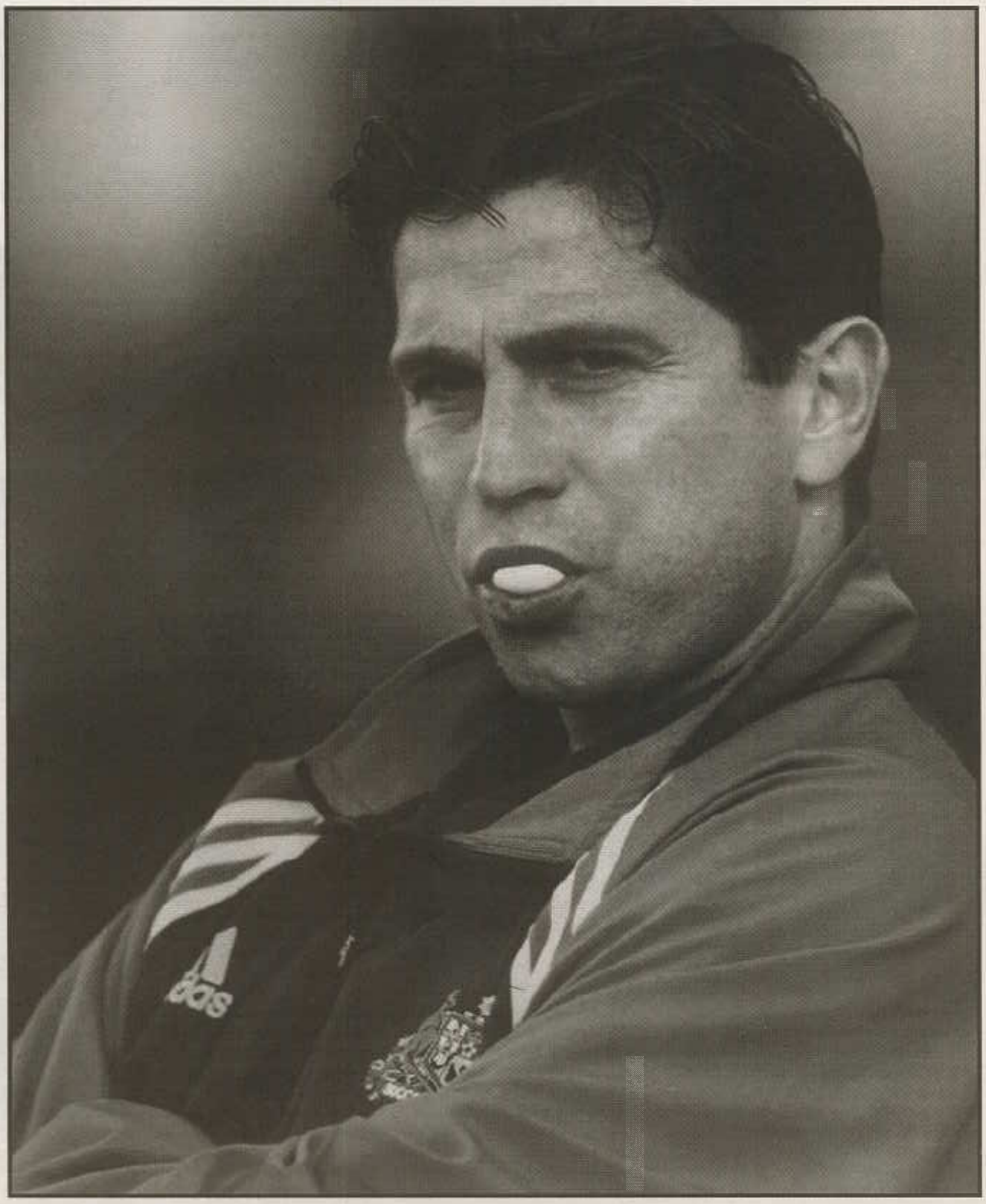
"The only solution was if he gave me 12 players which would allow me to give one to each of the 12 clubs."

Farina was stunned by the rejection, describing it as "staggering".

He said, "I would have thought it would be a fantastic promotion for the league which would help the national team at the same time.

"My intention is to name maybe 30 players to keep them ticking over because some players will be finishing as early as April 7.

"We cannot take this tournament lightly especially when there is so much at stake ($4 million in appearance money from the FIFA Confederations Cup) -- we only have to look back to 1998 when we were beaten by New Zealand in the final.



MR X

Word has it that a former prominent World Cup player-cum-television analyst has a major problem with the booze.

A VERY serious problem.

Obviously for confidential reasons, his name cannot be revealed but it came as a major shock to this hack, and good old Mr X has been around the traps for a fair few years now, when the discovery was made.

****

RUMOUR has it that there is complete chaos at Wollongong with coach Ron Corry's position under siege.

Our man on the south coast says that several well-paid players have been told they can start searching for new clubs - even though they're still under contract with the Wolves.

Corry's selection policies this season have been on the weird side, especially with the ill-treatment of his highly-paid newcomers who have spent most of the season getting splinters on the first grade bench.

Reserve graders on six-figure incomes? Such a scenario is a dubious one that even Corry couldn't be proud of.

****

IT was interesting to read a few of the comments made by some of the NSW Super and Premier League coaches during the last week.

Firstly Fraser Park coach John Sentas expressed his concerns over players that have come and gone through the club in the last year and that he is now looking for more stable players that are going to stay with the club. A fair call.

But it was peculiar to see that the Jets have just signed a former Premier League player. A player who's ability and skill are not in question, but loyalty is certainly not one of his stronger points.

It will be interesting to see if this player sticks it out with the club, especially if he spends any time on the bench.

I'd also like to let some of the Super League clubs know that the top five make the finals, not the top twelve, as just about every club was confident of making it to the finals.

****

I also see that the attacking ability of the Bonnyrigg White Eagles has been highlighted in a recent article.

The question was posed to coach Greg Woodhouse who is in his first full year at the club, that will he be employing the same attacking flair with New South Wales that he has with the Bonnyrigg side this season.

He of course said that he would be, but whoever asked such a question would be best advised to check out the recent history of the club, which shows their goals for this season is well down on previous years, where they have averaged just about 70 goals per season.

Their defensive record is certainly strong which suggests that there has been more of an emphasis on defence rather than attack this season.

****

Still on Bonnyrigg, former Marconi player Vuko Tomasevic is believed to have signed with Adelaide City, and I have also heard whispers that Parramatta Eagles coach Tam Finlayson had turned down the job of NSW coach.

Nothing against Woodhouse who has done a good job withthe White Eagles this season, but Finlayson also has the runs on the board with Parramatta and I'm sure nobody would've complained had he accepted the position.

****

They certainly take their training seriously out at Bankstown with an ambulance called in last week to help midfielder Adam Mammolitti during one of their sessions.

Mammolitti had lost all feeling in his legs after a knock to his back and was rushed to hospital. He has since regained feeling in his legs and moving freely once again, but didn't play on the weekend.

****

Finally I'd like to leave with a few comments concerning the administrative side of the game in this country.

When it comes to Soccer Australia and the NSW Soccer Federation, most people already know that one has money and the other doesn't.

But I think there needs to be a shake-up in both camps with an injection of younger heads with more enthusiasm for the game.

One of the first things that must be done in NSW is for the federation to give greater incentives to the clubs.

This has to be done by splitting the prize-money for clubs all the way through the league, not just for the clubs that finish up the top. Of course the clubs finishing at the top should get a greater share, but those finishing down the bottom and mid-table should also receive some money.

As it stands now, the top clubs continue to get richer, whilst the lower ones continue to struggle. If they make it to the top league, they should be given some reward, if they get demoted, they lose out and receive a lesser payment in a lower division.

This should apply in all the divisions throughout NSW. I'm not saying just give the clubs a hand out, they should be made to work for it by holding training camps, doing charity work or something along those lines.

I think if you were to get the heads of all the clubs to sit around a table and discuss this you will find that most will support the idea.

****

Mr X says Australian soccer administration needs a shake-up

SHORT PASSES

Boro manager praises young Aussie

MIDDLESBROUGH manager Steve McClaren has praised Luke Wilkshire after the Australian's eye-catching home debut against Liverpool at the weekend. Wilkshire was called up at the last minute after Noel Whelan failed a fitness test but showed no sign of nerves, taking half of the team's efforts on goal during the 2-1 defeat.

The 20-year-old had played in the first team once before, in the 1-1 draw at Southampton. But this was the first chance home fans had to watch the midfielder, who has scored five goals for the reserves this season.

He has yet to score a first team goal but went close several times for a side criticised for not taking enough shots at goal this season. "I thought Luke had a tremendous game," McClaren told the Middlesbrough website.

"He came in at the eleventh hour because Noel Whelan has been in bed for two days. "We gave Noel every chance and gave him a fitness test this morning but we felt he was not quite right. Luke came in and could have been the hero."

Byrnes' Euro hopes dashed by untimely injury

AUSTRALIAN Mark Byrnes' European career has been dealt a major blow after he fell and injured his knee at training last week. It appears the 20-year-old may need a knee reconstruction and will see a second doctor in Milan to discover his fate. To make matters worse, Byrnes had been promoted to first grade the same week. Byrnes, of Parramatta Power, has been on loan to Italian Club, Vicenza for five months.

Blatsis joins minnow

Con Blatsis has played himself into winning a permanent deal with English Second Division Colchester United. The Australia Under 23 international joined the U's on a non-contract last week and turned in a man-of-the-match display against QPR over the weekend.

Colchester boss Steve Whitton said, "Con's signed on a non-contract basis, sort of a weekly contract kind of thing, but we're interested in taking it further."

Blatsis was released by Derby County in January.

Wolves manager furious over Muscat cheap shot

AUSTRALIA international Kevin Muscat faces a long spell on the sidelines after being sent off for elbowing an opponent during English first division club Wolves' 1-0 loss to Grimsby at the weekend.

Wolves boss Dave Jones was furious that Muscat's alter ego of Big Bad Wolf raised its head again after nearly a season in storage, costing the division leaders the game.

Muscat was sent off in the 53rd minute for a mindless elbow on Grimsby striker Michael Boulding and his dismissal allowed Grimsby to steal a late goal and the game.

"I have influenced Kevin Muscat not to do that sort of thing for over 40 games but today it was an act of stupidity," Jones said.

"I don't know what's gone off inside his head.

"We are trying to cut that sort of stuff out of the game.

"The suspension will cost him because he's not playing and I want my best players on the pitch.

"I won't accept any apologies from him, he's changed the course of the game.

"He has let himself down and he's let the club down.

"I thought we had got through to him because he has not been in trouble lately.

"That was an act of violent conduct which deserves a red card.

"His suspension will give someone else the chance to stake a claim."

Boulding was knocked out by the blow to his chin but said he did not know what had set Muscat off.

"There was no conversation between us during the game but whenever I went near him he seemed to catch me.

"Maybe he didn't like the look of me," he said.

No date has been set for any Football Association hearing.

FRANCIS AWARITEFE writes Football

Winning the Minor Premiership is no minor effort

ONCE again, the perennial question is been asked again. Should the NSL adopt a "first past the post" or "play offs" system in order to decide the NSL championship?

Let me declare right from the offset that I do have an interest in this discussion, having won four "minor premierships" with three separate clubs.

Perth Glory supporters are claiming that the Glory is the true champions having finished top of the NSL ladder and from where I'm sitting, I cannot see anything wrong with their claim.

I make no bones that I'm a traditionalist.

The United Kingdom was where I spent my formative years as a footballer. There, as in most of Europe, the team that finishes top is crowned champions.

The Glory has been dominant and has won the NSL minor premiership with five or six games to spare.

I can see the argument that when you have first past the post, the championship race can be over with several games to play to play, and that fans, therefore tend to lose interest.

Furthermore the proponents of the Playoff system argue that by having a playoff system, it gives the other clubs and their supporters something to play for, as the race hots up towards the end of the regular season.

Another argument used successfully to justify the Play-Off system is that, unlike European leagues where there is an FA Cup style competition, Australian Soccer does not have such a competition and therefore the play-offs provide a Cup like atmosphere because of it's knock out nature.

In my view, competing in the NSL should be about aspiring to excellence, and if the other teams in the league cannot match Perth Glory's high standards on the field, then artificial means should not be used to bring them back to the field.

This is precisely what the Playoff system achieves.

It rewards mediocrity at the expense of excellence.

Winning the League championship is about being the best team over the entire season.

It's a marathon, a war of attrition, fought over several months where the most talented and mentally toughest come out on top.

It's about performing at a high level week in week out.

Lets face it, any team can get lucky in a cup competition.

Freak results can sometimes occur owing to its sudden death nature.

If we must have a cup competition, then lets organise one on the same basis as Europe, with sizeable prize money for the winner.

This will ensure clubs take it seriously.

It will also give smaller clubs the romance of being able to take on the big boys and perhaps achieving "giant killer" status.

I remember playing in the FA Cup for Sutton United, a Vauxhall Conference side and scaring the living daylights out of a Bruce Rioch-led Middlesbrough in the third round.

The Middlesbrough side had players the callibre of former England internationals Garry Pallister, Stuart Ripley and Tony Mowbray.

We lost 1-0 away, after a replay having drawn 1-1 at home.

Just imagine the excitement that would be generated in the lower leagues if they were presented with an opportunity to participate in such a competition.

The Playoff system devalues the league championship competition by reducing it to a lottery.

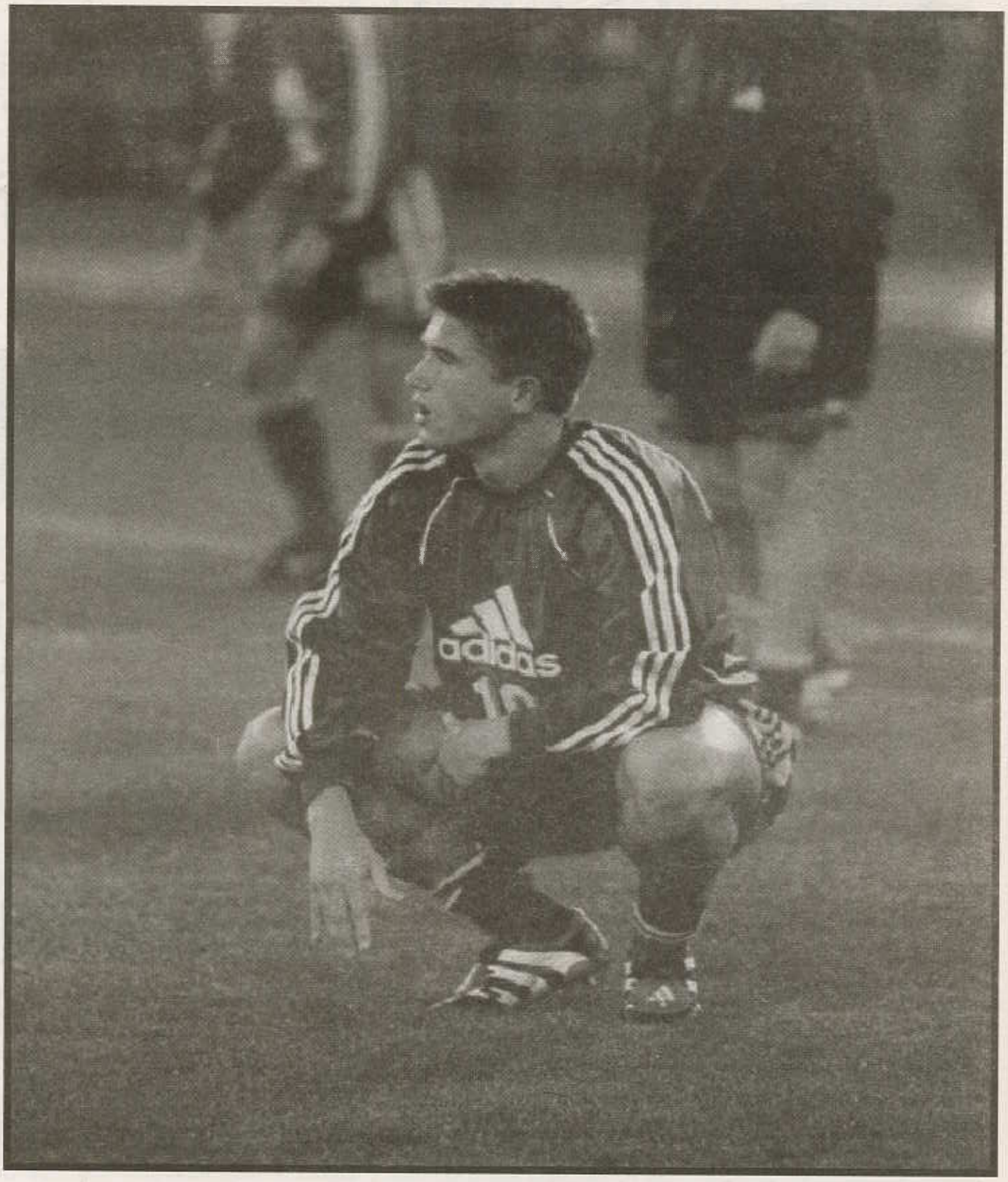
It basically reduces the whole season to one game, the grand final if you get there.

Believe me, it's a lot harder trying to maintain high standards over a season, than it is over four or five games.

As far as I'm concerned, there is no such thing as a minor premiership, because the effort required to finish top of the league is not a "minor" effort.

Kewell again voted Oceania Player of the Year

By Ted Simmons



SOCCEROO and Leeds striker Harry Kewell has won the Oceania Footballer of the Year title for the second time.

Kewell, who previously won the award in 1999, narrowly beat Leeds team-mate Mark Viduka by four votes to take the 2001 title.

"When I won the first time it was great but to win again in such a short space is even better," Kewell said from Leeds.

"It's a great honour to be named the best in Oceania and I'd like to give my thanks to the support from the voters."

Kewell polled 87 votes from Viduka on 83 with the fast-rising Socceroo Brett Emerton third on 59 from fellow Australian Craig Moore on 23.

Viduka won the 2000 award by 14 votes from Kewell with a huge gap of 77 votes to third placed Simon Elliott (NZ) and Richard Iwai (Vanuatu).

Kewell was prominent in Australia's international last year against France and the World Cup play-offs against Uruguay but has been having a patchy season with Leeds in the English Premier League.

"You can't go through life without a bad spell and right now I'm looking at getting back into the game," he said.

"To those players in Australia who are coming through the ranks, I can only advise them to work hard and enjoy themselves."

Emerton, after a successful career in the Australian national league, transferred to Feyenoord in Europe where he has been in great demand.

The Dutch giants are fighting leader Ajax and challenger PSV Eindhoven for the league championship with Emerton rapidly becoming the target for other clubs,especially in England.

Latest reports indicate Newcastle is the strongest bidder but final moves are not expected until the end of the season.

Moore, with Glasgow Rangers, turned in his best performances of the year for the Scottish club and for Australia in its run of internationals, particularly France and Uruguay.

Leading Oceania players outside Australia to poll well were 21-year-old Tahiti striker Maramas Vahirua, playing with Nantes in France while New Zealanders Ryan Nelsen, Ivan Vicelich and Simon Elliott have been very consistent.

THE WORLD OF WOMEN'S SOCCER

with Matildas star Anissa Tann-Darby

Looking ahead to the challenge of France

Anissa Tann-Darby has played more international matches for Australia than any other player in women's soccer history. Anissa writes a weekly column for SOCCER TODAY, offering readers a special insight into the women's game. This week: Anissa talks about the upcoming Australian tour to France.

Matildas coach Adrian Santrac

AN eighteen-member Australian women's squad was last week selected to tour France for a series of internationals against France, Japan and Canada.

Coach Adrian Santrac has had to make a number of changes to our team due to either injury or players unable to travel for either work related or personal reasons.

Five changes have been made to our team that won the recent Australia Cup series against South Korea.

These include the inclusion of Sue Read (debut), Bridgette Starr, Amy Wilson, Natalie Thomas and Amy Taylor.

After their recent National League title success the Canberra Eclipse have had six players selected in the squad and two on standby.

Not bad when you think Canberra got the competition's wooden spoon last year.

Queensland and NSW provide the bulk of the rest of the squad and with the inclusion of our overseas-based players we should once again prove to be a formidable team.

The team under Santrac has been extremely successful and other than our exhibition game in Japan when a very young and inexperienced side was selected we haven't had a loss yet.

Both the coaching staff and the players hope to continue this trend.

A number of players were unavailable for the tour to France, which has to some extent depleted our squad, but on the other hand it gives other players the opportunity to prove that they should be considered for regular National team duty.

Injuries have hampered Santrac's selections.

Defender Dianne Alagich is not too far away from resuming her playing career after a knee reconstruction. Taryn Rockall was also unlucky enough to sustain the same injury and should be able to resume her playing career in about four months as did Queensland striker Alicia Ferguson .

Our number one custodian Claire Nichols is also currently nurturing a knee injury, whilst team regulars Traci Bartlett and Cheryl Salisbury are unavailable.

Australia Youth team Captain Kate Mc shea has once again been selected and she is the only player from Young Matildas and will hope to stay away from injury with the World Youth Cup qualifiers only around the corner and the Inaugural Women's Youth cup not too far away.

Bridgette Starr missed out on an AIS Scholarship but she has been selected once again.

Bridgette has not been selected since the 2000 Olympics and her return can only strengthen our squad.

The same can be said of Amy Wilson.

She also hasn't played for the Matildas since the Sydney Olympics and she is a great player who is extremely versatile.

Her talent and vision will also be a great plus to the team.

Also it's great to have the team comedian back in the team!!!

We will be playing three games when we travel to France.

A number of players who made their debuts against South Korea have also been re selected; these include Rhian Davies who had a great tournament, Zoe Nolan (QLD), Cassandra Kell (NSW) and Gill Thomson (CAN).

Zoe has been on the fringe of the team for a while and is one of the most composed players in the league; hopefully she will kick ahead and become more of a regular in our side.

Prior to the tour we have a 12 day training camp, whereby players will have a number of different tests to have a look at their fitness standards and it is also once again an opportunity for the girls to gain some valuable knowledge in regards all areas of the sport.

The team will then fly out on the 29th March after this camp and also tucked away in the camp is the annual Women's Soccer luncheon to be held on Wednesday 20th March, whereby a large number of awards will be distributed to various players for their outstanding seasons either in the national team or in the Women's National League.

The full squad to France is:

Sharon Black (Denmark), Rhian Davies (CAN), Alison Forman (Denmark), Heather Garriock (NSW), Kelly Golebiowski (NSW), Cassandra Kell (NSW), April Mann (QLD), Kate McShea (QLD), Zoe Nolan (QLD), Joanne Peters (NSW), Sue read (CAN), Bridgette Starr (CAN), Anissa Tann (NSW), Amy Taylor (CAN), Natalie Thomas (QLD), Gill Thomson (CAN), Sacha Wainwright (CAN) and Amy Wilson (CAN).

Itinerary:

Wednesday 3 April

v Canada at Stadium de la Pepinere

Saturday 6 April

v Japan at Stadium Lebon

Tuesday 9 April

v France at Parc les sports de beau Blanc

Hickman unhappy with missed opportunity

By Derek Royal and David Mason

NORTHERN Spirit coach Mick Hickman was not impressed with several facets of Sunday's one-all draw at Sydney United.

First of all, he wasn't impressed with the result, which saw Spirit slump to seventh place on the table.

He wasn't impressed that former international Robbie Enes' indiscipline again saw him red-carded following his return from suspension.

And he certainly wasn't impressed when former Spirit player Gabriel Mendez celebrated scoring for United by racing towards the Spirit bench and allegedly spitting at them.

"It was an act of stupidity from a stupid person," Hickman said of the Mendez incident.

"I didn't find it humourous that he came over and spat at us."

Spirit will have plenty of time to mull over a missed opportunity when this week they sit on the sidelines courtesy of the bye.

Hickman would have hoped for maximum points against United, a scenario that would have seen them sitting pretty with just three rounds to go before the end of the regular season.

Spirit fell out of the top six at the worse possible time following a resurgent South Melbourne's 3-0 demolition of the Olympic Sharks on Sunday night.

Spirit took the lead in the first half when Pablo Cardozo scored his 12th goal of the season but was forced to split the points when Gabriel Mendez struck a free kick into the net in the 76th minute.

Cardozo's goal came in the 41st minute after some great lead up work by Marcus Stergiopolous. Cardozo snuck between two defenders and then lobbed Knezevic to put the Spirit into the lead.

The game, which was played in sweltering heat, never rose to any great heights although referee Mark Shields implemented drinks breaks and extended half time.

But the heat obviously got to some of the players, notably Mendez and Enes.

Following a Robbie Enes foul on the edge of the penalty box, Mendez struck his free kick sweetly over the wall and into the bottom left hand corner of the net.

He celebrated by taking off his shirt and racing straight to the Northern Spirit bench and he then amazingly spat at the Northern Spirit coaching staff.

Mendez received a yellow card but he has been reported to Soccer Australia and Northern Spirit will take the matter further.

Just one minute after Mendez equalised, Northern Spirit's hopes of a revival were all but dashed when Enes was sent off for a second yellow card.

This time it was his mouth that let him down and he was sent from the field in his comeback match from suspension.

Former Spirit players Paul Bilokapic, Daniel Watkins, Michael Cunico and Gabriel Mendez took part in the game.

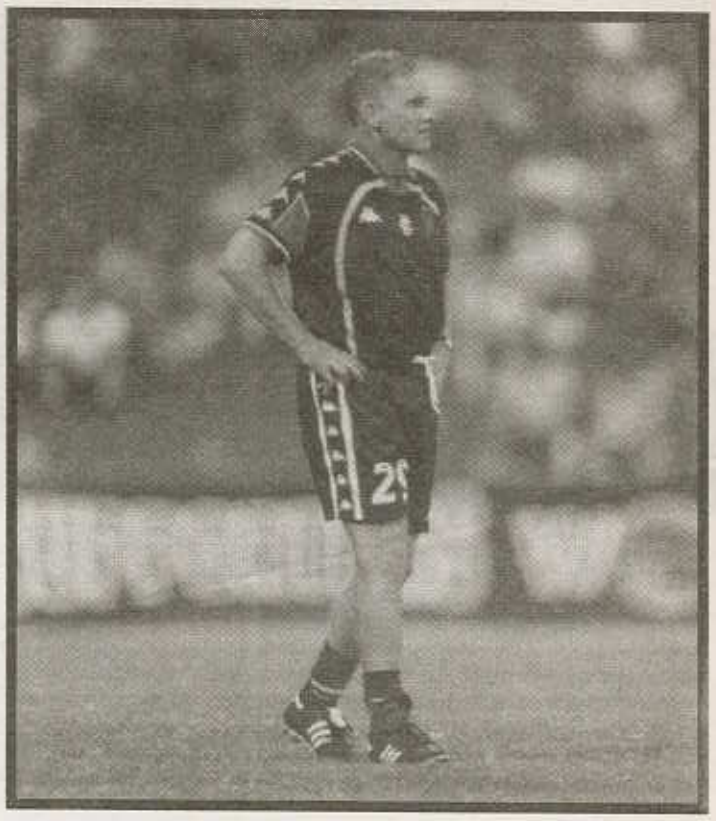
Cunico made his return to football following a six week break after being diagnosed with testicular cancer.

Cunico played 45 minutes for United before he was replaced at half time.

The draw has left Northern Spirit in 7th place on the National Soccer League ladder, level on 30 points with South Melbourne but behind on goal difference.

"It was disappointing to see it all go wrong for us in such a short time. We were playing some good football and creating a few chances at 1-0 up and then the (Mendez) free kick goes in and then Enes is sent off.

"We didn't need that (Enes send off) so soon after the goal," Hickman said.



"It wasn't ideal but if he (Enes) swore at the referee then he deserved to be sent off.

"Obviously the result is not ideal and it will make it a but tougher for us but I was always worried about this game (Sydney United).

"We will go to Melbourne for the game with the Knights and give it every thing we've got.

"I still think we will make this top six but we will have to do it the hard way."

Adrian Cervinski (suspension), Julian Watts (knee injury) and Scott Thomas (calf injury) will all be available for the Knights game, while Enes will be suspended.

Power youth taste defeat in Canberra - Spirit upsets United

PARRAMATTA Power's slick youth team suffered a shock 3-2 loss against the ACT Academy of Sport on Sunday.

Bu the setback doesn't affect the league leaders' position on top of the table, where they remain four points clear of the Wollongong Wolves.

The Power was without defender Pedj Bojic who was suspended last week for two matches.

Parramatta meets Sydney United on Saturday night at Parramatta Stadium.

Meanwhile, Northern Spirit continued their irresistible form with a deserved 2-1 win over top four contenders Sydney United at Edensor Park on Sunday.

Daniel Bateup opened the scoring with a thumping goal in the opening minutes but Sydney United fought its way back into the game with an equaliser on the stroke of half time.

The match looked like ending in a stalemate but Kiwi striker Brent Fisher scored a winner in stoppage time.

"That was a great result for us," said Spirit coach Phil Moss.

"Sydney United are one of the best sides in the league and we more than matched them and came away with the three points.

"Daniel Bateup and Brent Fisher were outstanding and it shows just how far we have come as a side this season and we will continue to improve."

CONTINUING OUR BEST READ WEEKLY SERIES ON

SOCCER SKILLS

MANAGING INJURY PART II

By Jimmy Fraser
former Australia World Cup goalkeeper

INJURIES never come at a good time!

Players should have an understanding of not only how to manage treatment and rehabilitation of the physical injury but also how to cope psychologically.

Prolonged recovery or even a week off at a critical time of the season can damage a players positive ongoing mental preparation and destroy confidence.

An important part of a players development program should be devoted to understanding the rehabilitation process both physically and mentally so they are preprepared to deal with an injury when it occurs.

While some players go through their playing careers with little or no major injuries, others seem to be in a battle zone with constant injuries that affect their careers and ultimately their selection chances at both club and representative level.

Injuries are part and parcel of the game, a fact of life that every player has to contend with at some time in their career. Injuries do not discriminate against good or bad players. Everyone who plays is susceptible at some time or other.

Minimising injuries by correct training, warming up, stretching, and then warming down at the end of a session will certainly help the player's get more time on the park but a bad injury often cannot be prevented and is just part of the game.

Sickness and non-playing related injuries also effect our park time and and we must also learn to cope with these problems.

The first thing we must understand is that these problems are a fact of life and many are beyond our control!

It is human nature for us to be distressed when these problems occur and also normal for us to worry about the effect it will have not only on our immediate or future career but also on our health in general.

Immediate treatment at the point of injury by the physio is critical. Then diagnoses by a doctor or specialist if necessary will give them the information required to plan a rehab program and get it underway as soon as possible.

Early diagnoses and treatment is important psychologically as the player then has a clear understanding of the injury, its immediate effects and a approximate recovery period before training can recommence.

Unfortunately it is in this treatment period that many players dwell on the injury and often psychologically destroy themselves as they lament on their bad luck.

Some injuries are just that, bad luck, a player in the wrong place at the wrong time committed in a tackle or challenge and injured as a result with no malice be either party.

A hamstring or tendon can tear under pressure for no apparent reason.

The fact is this type of

injury can happen at any time and once they occur we cannot change the situation only deal with it in by using the most effective methods available to help us recover and get us back on the park as soon as possible.

The treatment stage is critical to recovery and the player should ask as many questions as possible so they understand,

First if they could have prevented the injury by strengthening the injured part in training by warm up, stretching or weight training etc.

What drugs are being used for treatment and if there are any immediate or ongoing side effects from these drugs.

A clear description and understanding of the injury and how it may affect ongoing performance.

An approximate recovery time and any common problems or side effects that may arise during the treatment phase.

Player's must then stick to the treatment plan and dedicate their time in a positive manner to recuperating and getting back on the park.

This recuperation time should be spent by improving your knowledge of the game by reading or watching game and performance related videos, concentrating on positive input and eliminating any negative influences.

Continually talking about the injury and the ongoing problems can have a detrimental effect on recuperation, as will mixing with negative people in a negative environment. A positive environment where the emphasis is on recovery and getting back on the park will help keep a good psychological balance for the injured player.

If your injury allows, you may be able to institute a partial training program that allows you to maintain fitness or eye hand coordination etc. This type of training will keep your mind focused on the recovery and help to eliminate any negative thoughts from your mind.

SOCCER SKILLS COACHING

Improve your skills with the very best of Australia's specialist coaches

AUSTRALIAN GOALKEEPERS ACADEMY
Contact: Jim Fraser
0407 72 88 62
02 4295 7942
regular clinics in Sydney and on the South Coast
Central Coast:
Daryl Drake
0408 244 254
Sydney: Jim Fraser
0407 728 862

DUSAN PURAC SOCCER ACADEMY
World acclaimed for boys and girls
Highly recommended by FIFA
One of the world's top skills coaches **Dusan Purac** and excellent coaching staff.
MON-FRI 6-8 pm
SUN 10 am-12 noon
Sydneywide
Ph. 9949-5247
Mobile: 0418 263 644

TECHNICAL SKILL SOCCER COACHING
Contact:
Paul Falzon
TEL: 0409 989 814
02 9790 4074
For boys and girls every Sunday 3-5 p.m at Cabramatta Sports Ground, Begonia St, Cabramatta

Ngata set to play 100th ... Mori hits 50 for Glory

EVERY week a milestone is established in the sporting world and the National Soccer League is no exception.

Soccer Australia's media and publicity coordinator Anita Bulan gives us the run-down on this week's big occasions ...

HARRY NGATA is due to make his 100th NSL appearance when his team, the Kingz FC, come up against Newcastle United at EnergyAustralia Stadium on Friday.

Ngata played 18 games for Brunswick in the 1994/95 season, before recommencing his NSL career with the Kingz when the club joined the NSL in 1999/00.

DAMIAN MORI is set to play his 50th NSL match for the Perth Glory when his team takes on the Adelaide City Force at Hindmarsh Stadium on Friday. The thirty-one year old striker joined the Glory at the start of last season, and in his 49 games for the club so far has amassed 36 goals.

ALSO IN THIS MATCH Matthew Kemp is due to play his 50th NSL match for the Adelaide City Force. Kemp played with the Force in 1999/00, and returned this season after spending the 2000/01 season with Spal in Italy.

THE LAST six goals scored for Marconi Stallions have all been scored by Royce Brownlie. If Brownlie scores Marconi's next goal then he will equal the NSL record for most consecutive goals scored by the same player for a team.

The current record of scoring consecutive team goals is held by Ivan Kelic, who scored seven consecutive goals for the Olympic Sharks in season 1993/94:

Jan 23 v Parramatta Eagles - two goals (48' 62');
Jan 26 v Adelaide City - three goals (16' 24' 66');
Jan 29 v Marconi Stallions - one goal (64');
Feb 06 v Heidelberg - one goal (8').

The following players, including Brownlie, scored six successive goals for his team:-

Branko Buljevic - South Melbourne 1980: Jul 06 v Footscray - two goals (51' 80'); Jul 13 v Adelaide Sharks - two goals (63' 64'); Jul 20 v Blacktown City - two goals (21' 33')

Gary Cole - Heidelberg 1981: Aug 30 v Blacktown City - one goal (82'); Sep 06 v Newcastle KB United - two goals (20' 51'); Sep 13 v Leichhardt - one goal (16'); 1982: Feb 13 v Canberra City - two goals (15' 76')

Marshall Soper - Sydney Olympic 1983: Oct 16 v Heidelberg - one goal (67'pen); Oct 23 v Preston - one goal (19'); 1984: Mar 11 v Brisbane Lions - one goal (7'); Mar 18 v Sydney United - three goals (9' 57' 69')

Charlie Egan - South Melbourne 1985: Mar 17 v Preston - one goal (74'); Mar 24 v Footscray - three goals (10' 42' 80'); Mar 31 v Brunswick - two goals (6' 74')

Charlie Egan - South Melbourne 1985: Aug 18 v Adelaide Sharks - three goals (23' 65' 69'); Aug 28 v Preston - three goals (12' 39' 84')

Paul Lewis - Melbourne Knights 1988: Mar 27 v Footscray - two goals (75' 82'); Apr 10 v Olympic Sharks - three goals (10' 82' 87'); Apr 13 v Sydney United - one goal (55')

Greg Brown - Parramatta Eagles 1990: Jan 21 v South Melbourne - one goal (88'); Jan 26 v Sydney United - one goal (94'pen); Jan 28 v Sunshine - one goal (68'pen); Feb 11 v Leichhardt - one goal (88'); Feb 18 v Preston - two goals (16' 51')

David Seal - Marconi Stallions 1990: Dec 08 v Parramatta Eagles - two goals (57' 77'); Dec 23 v Illawarra Lions - three goals (22' 64' 70'); Dec 30 v South Melbourne - one goal (58')

Royce Brownlie - Marconi Stallions 2002: Mar 02 v Parramatta Power - three goals (40' 55' 57'); Mar 08 v Newcastle United - one goal (44'); Mar 16 v Adelaide City - two goals (51' 93')

- Brownlie's Stallions are up against the Olympic Sharks at Toyota Park on Sunday.

Damien Mori this weekend plays his 50th NSL match for Glory

FOUR of the five Parramatta Power goalscorers in the Power's 7-1 victory over the Kingz FC last weekend were aged under 21. This is only the third time in NSL history that four or more under 21 players have scored for one team in a match:

MARCONI STALLIONS v Penrith City 22.04.84: Marconi's scorers included Tom McCulloch (20 years old), Rod Brown (20), David Lowe (20) and Steve Calderan (20). Marconi won 7-1.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES v Inter Monaro 31.03.85: Wollongong's scorers were Pat Brodnik (18); Zivko Hristovski (20); Peter Kotamanidis (20); Domenic Giannone (20). Wollongong won 4-2.

PARRAMATTA POWER v Football Kingz 16.03.02: Parramatta's scorers included Brett Holman (17); Adam Kwasnik (18); Matt Thompson (19) and Ahmad Elrich (20)

Letters to the Editor

**May be sent on any subject relative to football. Letters should be kept brief, preferably relative to a single point.
The Publisher reserves the right to alter (for the sake of grammar or clarity) or delete any letter.
Address all correspondence to royal_publishing@yahoo.com.au or Soccer Today at PO Box 566, Kogarah, NSW 2217 or by fax to (02) 9588-6500. A contact name and telephone number must be supplied although nom-de-plumes may be used. Unidentified or unsigned letters will not be printed under any circumstances.**

Hey dudes, where is all the youth league coverage?

Sir,

I am disappointed that you haven't seen fit to cover the various NSW Soccer Federation youth leagues, including the Premier Youth, Super Youth and Division One youth as these are important growth areas in the game.

I coach an under 15 team at Granville and thought that you would at least run the weekly results.

Could you please rectify this as I am sure there are hundreds of kids and parents out there who would be more than interested to buy your publication and to read about their teams or their kids' teams.

Thank you,
Scott Quarmby
(via email)

Sir,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my son's local youth team.

You may or may not know it, but youth football in NSW is a big deal for the thousands of boys, girls and parents involved.

We would like some recognition of this fact and feel that as a specialist soccer magazine, you have a duty to promote this level of the game, not just the National League, Overseas Aussies and the various senior competitions throughout Australia.

We all enjoy reading about Harry Kewell, Mark Viduka and co, but at the end of the day, the kids who compete and the parents who follow them, would much prefer to see material written about their own competitions.

Kind Regards,
Lisa Costas
Blakehurst
NSW

Sir,

Congratulations on the magazine, it continues to get better and better.

However, I have a couple of gripes and they concern NSW youth football.

I have three sons and they all play youth league. I would love to read about their competitions on a weekly basis but unfortunately you don't even carry their results, let alone tables and heaven forbid, articles about the boys and their respective teams.

I also have a daughter who is progressing nicely in her particular league (as you can see we're real soccer nuts in this household) yet her competition (like the boys') receives zero promotion.

I was also concerned that the WNSL Grand Final between NSW and Canberra received minimal coverage.

Just thought I'd voice my humble opinion because these are areas that I feel can be rectified.

Cheers,
Peter Walters,
(via email)

Sir,

The NSW youth competitions are in full swing and I haven't seen so much as a result in your magazine.

What's going on?

Will you be rectifying this or not?

I hope so.

Cheers,
Deano,
Petersham,
NSW

In the past month or so SOCCER TODAY has received several letters regarding our so-called limited coverage of competitions played under the auspices of the NSW Soccer Federation. To those of you who feel we do not devote enough space to these competitions, we apologise. But it must be said that providing such information is not always possible thanks to the political stench that permeates the game at various levels. For a more detailed editorial response, please turn to The Final Whistle on Page 29. Maybe then the critics will better understand our position as new publishers - Cheers, Derek Royal

About the Johnny Warren interview

Sir,
I read with interest your interview with former Socceroo captain Johnny Warren. Allow me to make the following observations. Frank Arok in 1968 at St. George introduced daily training sessions at 4pm five days per week. The first grade squad had everything prepared and laid out. Which poses the question: does any club in Australia currently do this? Rale Rasic introduced three daily training sessions when the national team was in camp, impressed the discipline and got the results. Talking further about the two hours freedom after the second World Cup match, does Johnny recall what happened in 1972 in Munich? Who is responsible if something happens to the players? If not mistaken, it was Warren who packed his bags in Tel Aviv on our way to the World Cup wanting to go home! Were you not the vice-captain of our team? was your personal view greater than that of your country? You have been claiming in the past 30 years that you were World Cup captain. When the great Peter Wilson was our World Cup captain from 1971-74, did you ever mention his name? Finally, the language you use in your interview is not a credit to your standing as a so-called expert on soccer. Relationships are built on mutual trust, pride, tradition, loyalty and a sense of belonging. "He who doesn't know where he comes from doesn't know where he is going to".
Simon Turudia,
Caulfield, VIC

NSW AMATEUR SOCCER FEDERATION

PO BOX 6073, BAULKHAM HILLS BUSINESS CENTRE, NSW 2153
235-257 MEURANTS LANE, GLENWOOD TELEPHONE 02 9629 2833 FAX 02 9629 1051
WEBSITE: www.nswasf.com.au

NEWS SNIPPETS

MANLY-WARRINGAH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Manly-Warringah Soccer Association is the fourth largest Association in the NSW Amateur Soccer Federation. It comprises 18 Clubs, 803 teams (Including Sub-Juniors) and boasts a huge player base of 9,915 registered players and with the exception of one club, all clubs consist of more than ten teams.

It all began back in 1947 when players still had to walk to the games and erect the goals and nets, mark the fields and take it all down afterwards and it was a small group of soccer enthusiasts who got together to form an Association for the increasing number of keen soccer players in the Manly area.

Today the game in Manly-Warringah is booming, players range from Under 6 to All Age together with a women's Sunday Competition with girls ages ranging from Under 12 to All age and this year trying to get an Over 35 division up and running.

It was in 1998 that an alliance was formed and the Warringah Dolphins came under the wing of the MWSA. This integration has proven very successful and today all Amateur and semi-professional soccer in the Manly-Warringah area remains under the guidance of the MWSA.

The Manly-Warringah President Mrs. Linda Ward was elected to the position in 1995 after 2 years as Senior Vice President. Linda was involved with her husband John in the Collaroy Plateau Youth and Community Clubs and was one of the instigators of the merger of that club and the Cromer Youth Club to become the Collaroy Cromer Strikers Soccer Club.

In 2000 the MWSA decided the job of Secretary was a mammoth task for one individual working on a voluntary basis and decided to hire a part time Administration Assistant. After only 3 months, the part-time became full time and all administration work for all of the Association is now the responsibility of Association Administrator, Jeremy Toivonen.

The NSW Amateur Soccer Federation acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the Association committees. In 2001, the President of Manly-Warringah Soccer Association, Linda Ward (pictured above), was presented with a

State Award at the NSWASF Annual Dinner and Presentation night.

2002 Manly-Warringah Soccer Association Committee

President - Mrs. Linda Ward, Senior Vice President - Ray Fanning, Senior Vice President Rep Football - Keith Pester, Vice President (Sub-Juniors) - Greg Carroll, Vice President (Juniors) - Andrew Edwards, Vice President (Seniors) - David Anglicas, Vice President (Women) - Joe Mastrioanni, Registrar (Junior) - Bruce Smith, Registrar (senior) - Mrs. Lorna Gale, Minute Secretary - Tony Davies, Rep Convener - Sandro Innani, Insurance Officer - Charles Vale, Results Officer/Secretary - Syd Russell.

The Manly-Warringah Association is always keen to find a better solution and 2002 will see the trial of a new judiciary system. This system results in all players being informed in writing the offence to which they have been charged within 3 days of the send off with set game suspensions. The player, if he accepts those games will be eligible for a one game reduction in the sentence, with the exception of offences of a serious nature. Then the player will be required to attend a judiciary Committee hearing. It is hoped that this system will reduce the time spent by the Judiciary Committee at those hearings, and the amount of appeals against their decisions.

Soccer continues to be a popular sport for all ages and the 2002 season looks to be another great one for the Manly-Warringah Association, its clubs, players and fans.

NSWASF POSITION VACANT
ACCOUNTANT

The NSWASF located at Glenwood seeks to employ a person to fill the position of Accountant, to control the day-to-day financial affairs of the Federation. The NSWASF has a player base of some 125,000 as well as a significant number of volunteers, administrators, coaches and referees. Suitable tertiary qualifications, excellent communication skills and experience in MYOB, Attache and Microsoft applications are essential. A competitive salary package will be negotiated with the successful applicant.

Applications close: 5th April 2002.

Applications should be in writing and addressed to:

THE GENERAL MANAGER
NSW Amateur Soccer Federation
PO Box 6073
Baulkham Hills BC NSW 2153

NEW NSWASF WEBSITE

THE new NSWASF website is now on-line and full of information for the coming season.

The website is user friendly and players, coaches, managers and soccer fans of all ages will have a great time searching the site and utilising the new features.

Results, tables and fixtures of the combined Sydney branch & NSW Soccer Federation 14 & 16 Girl's competition and the Youth League Competition will feature on the site as well as all the Amateur Federation run competitions.

Another new feature is "Find A Club" where you can find the nearest club to where you live at the click of a button!

Also featured is the Soccer Wearhouse which is the official NSWASF outlet for supply of all your clubs needs at great prices!

See the new NSWASF website at **www.nswasf.com.au**

SOCCER WEARHOUSE

We understand your soccer needs and have the knowledge to meet them

235-237 Meurants Lane Glenwood NSW
Phone: 02 9629 2833 Fax: 02 9629 1051
Mobile: 0418 961 861 AH: 02 988 5159
Email: culli@australis.net.au
www.soccerwearhouse@nswasf.com.au

We stock a large range of apparel
State Blues + Covo + Umbro + Admiral + Attack + Sports + Soccer Shirts International + UHLSPORT

Other items include
Balls + Goalkeeping Equipment + Shinguards + Referees Equipment + Coaching Manuals + Training Aids + Books + Videos + Medals + Bags + Caps + Field Marking Equipment + Goal Nets + Medical Items

We can also meet the needs of other sports
Touch Footy + Basketball + Hockey + Netball + Rugby League + Rugby Union

The Spirit of Australia.
Wunala dreaming
Qantas offers you one of the widest range of services both to and within Australia. With over 50 destinations around the country fly with the airline that can show you the very best of Australia.
www.qantas.com.au
QANTAS

Trans Tasman adventure: ON THE ROAD WITH THE POWER

PARRAMATTA Power last week ventured across the Tasman Sea for the vital National League showdown against Auckland-based Football Kingz.

A win would keep the Power's slim Top Six hopes alive while a loss would see the boys start preparing for next season.

Power media manager Taghred Chandab joined the Power boys on their Trans Tasman adventure and documented an exclusive for SOCCER TODAY.

IF anyone had told me that the Power would leave Auckland with a record-breaking win I probably would have laughed.

I'm not saying the boys aren't capable of it it's just that their preparation wasn't very easy.

We were told to meet at Sydney Airport on Thursday night, two hours before our flight.

As I put my luggage down and walked towards the check-in counter I was told Matt Langdon didn't check his passport or the expiry date and he was on his way back home to Campbelltown.

The coaching-staff was now in a tight situation and had to rush another player to the airport in time for the 6.45pm flight.

As I stood at the counter I overheard one of the attendants say the flight had been delayed for two hours.

His comforting words couldn't have come at a better time.

John Buonavoglia got the call-up and was at the airport within an hour.

Several hours had passed and finally we heard the boarding call for QF44 to Auckland.

We were all on the plane when we found out why the flight had been delayed - the crew flew into the wrong airport.

It was now 9pm and we were still on the runway.

There is a three-hour time difference between Sydney and Auckland so our arrival time was scheduled for after 1am (NZ time).

The flight was smooth we had no hassles and the boys were doing well, but of course we were all tired and hungry.

We were extremely happy when we reached Auckland.

Everyone went through customs without a problem and we were on our way to the bus.

I thought it was smooth sailing, but it wasn't.

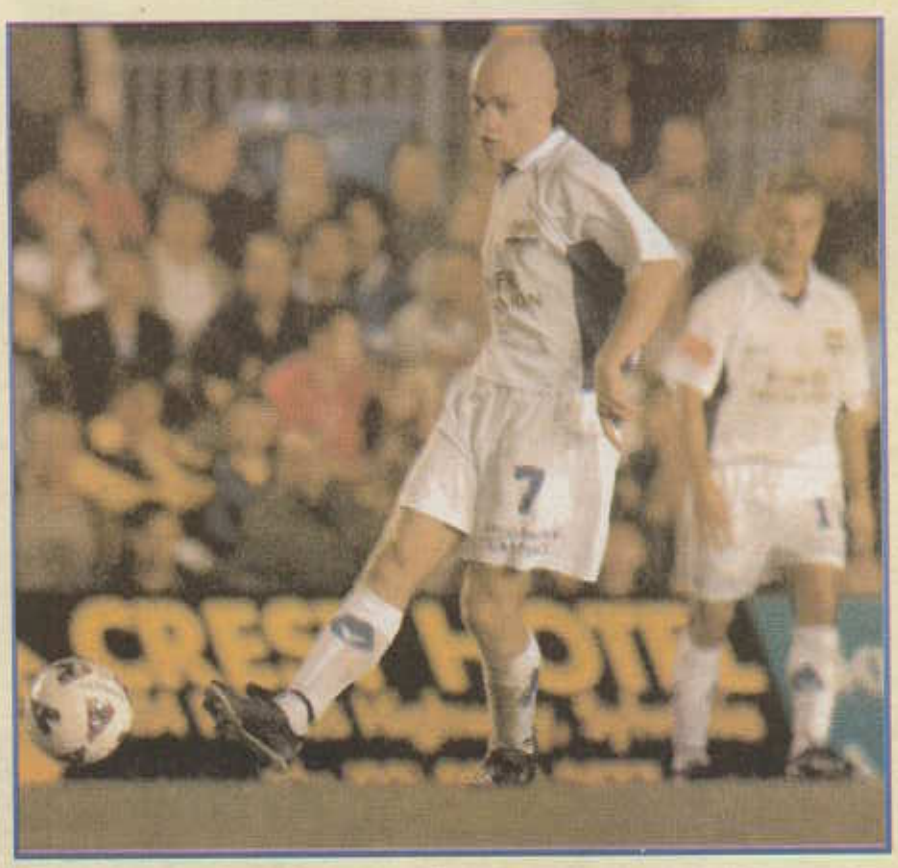
The Club had invited several sponsors along to New Zealand to thank them for their support.

The majority of us were sitting on the bus waiting for a few people to board but little did we know that one of our bags had gone missing.

Unfortunately the airport was unable to locate it that night. It did however recover the bag and return it to its owner the next morning.

It was about 3.30am before we checked-in to the Sheraton Hotel.

At that stage we were all restless and just wanted to get to our rooms and sleep.



Fortunately I was one of the few who managed to sleep in.

The boys were up several hours later to prepare for the game.

The team had its usual training session and all the players appeared to have recovered well from the previous night.

They all seemed bubbly and confident during lunch at the Sheraton.

Everyone was looking forward to the game against the Kingz and they all knew a lot was riding on the match and they just wanted to win.

Many just wanted to go to their room and catch up on some sleep, and I think it did a lot of them the world of good.

It was now 6pm on Friday night and the team was on the bus on its way to Ericsson Stadium.

There was only an hour-and-a-half before kick off.

I spent the majority of the game in the media box talking to the journalists about the Kingz and the Club's struggle in Auckland.

When Harry Ngata scored for the Kingz in the opening minutes of the game I felt my heart drop to my gut.

It's never easy watching your team lose or concede the first goal. It changes everything, but this time luck was on our side. I could really sympathise with the Kingz supporters, the media and the Club officials.

As soon as Peter Bennett scored the equaliser I felt a little bit more comfortable. The match is 90 minutes long and there was still 70 minutes left. When the boys came out firing in the second half I thought I was watching a completely different team. I had spent all season listening to the media, supporters and everyone else who complain about our strikers and our poor attempts at goal.

The Kingz media was watching in dismay as their team copped a thrashing. When the final whistle went I just didn't know what to say or do. We had lost four on the trot and then had a record-breaking win. It kept our finals hopes alive. On the bus the boys were singing their songs and soaking in their triumphant win. It was great to be a part of it. It's the kind of match you want to win at home and in front of your own supporters, but that's not always the case.

FOUR SUPER REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE TO *SOCCER TODAY!*

1. It's cheaper
2. To-your-door service – no hassles about shop sell-outs
3. Great savings on our reader offers
4. You'll never miss a beat, keeping up to date with the stories that the others don't carry

Soccer Today
Is Australian soccer's major publication with a remit to provide an in-depth coverage of the local game.
It is the only weekly soccer magazine in Australia and has a major national newsagency distribution chain.

Our writers are drawn from the ranks of professional journalists and we also access international and national news services and photographic agencies.

Name .....
Address .....
.....
..... P/code .....

☐ Subscription @ 10 issues ☐ 25 issues ☐ 50 issues

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS COME WITH A MONEY-BACK REFUND GUARANTEE*.

Issues	*x 10*	*x 25*	*x 50*
Australia	$35	$75	$130
New Zealand	$NZ40	$NZ80	$NZ135
Asia	$A60	$A140	$A258
Europe	$A65	$A150	$A280
Americas	$A65	$A150	$A280

* Refunds will be given on a pro-rata basis for the unused portion of your subscription at any time – no questions asked. This is our 110% guarantee of quality and service.

Payment should be sent to;
Royal Publishing
Suite 12, 3A Railway Pde
Kogarah NSW 2217
AUSTRALIA

Please make cheques payable to Royal Publishing

And for a limited time only: a FIFTH great reason to subscribe to *SOCCER TODAY!*

For a very limited time, each subscriber to *SOCCER TODAY!* will receive a FREE copy of skills coach Dusan Purac's video **READY SET GOAL!**

This is one of the best skills videos on the market. Filmed in Sydney it shows an amazing display of individual skills - and how to do them. More importantly it shows junior players performing these incredible ball tricks, tricks which have become the hallmark of players like Australia's Harry Kewell. This video is also officially approved by FIFA, an indication of the quality of the skills and coaching on show.

With an RRP of $30, this video is offered FREE for all new subscribers to *SOCCER TODAY!* Don't miss out!

The Grass Roots Game sponsored by
PAT FRASER REAL ESTATE
Westmead 9689 1344 Toongabbie 9636 1222

Ryde City just cruisin' along nicely in Division One Youth League

By Adam Leto

Ryde City's youth league sides have made a good start to the NSW Soccer Federation's first division competition with three of their four sides so far undefeated after two rounds.

The 17s in particular have shown strong form with a 2-1 win over Mt. Druitt in the first round followed by a 4-1 win against Mt.Pritchard last week.

"They're a bit of an unknown quantity and we've been pleseantly surprised with what they've shown so far," youth convenor Paul Cechellero told *Soccer Today*.

"They didn't win one of their trial games, but if they keep showing this same form they'll be a finals contender."

The 13s and 14s have also made solid starts with the 13s having a win and a draw and the 14s sharing the points in both their matches to date.

"I think in the 13s competition there will be some easy games and some tough games," Cechellero says.

"I thought we were unlucky against Illawarra not to get all three points.

"Having said that I thought our 14s were lucky to get a draw against Mt Pritchard and they certainly had some very good chances.

According to Cechellero the 14s competition will be the one to watch this season.

"It's going to be a very tough competition, this will be the one to watch closely," he says.

"We have a great coach and so far we haven't been able to field our strongest line-up, so I think we'll only get better."

The only disappointing feature in what has otherwise been a bright beginning has been the 15s who have had a disrupted preparation.

Having one the 14s Premiership last season, not one single player remains as the majority have gone on to Super or Premier Youth League sides.

"It's basically a brand new team," Cechellero says.

"Had we stayed in the Super Youth League we would've been able to keep those players.

"But we did have some good trial results with wins over Hurstville and Stanmore, so we're still hopeful they'll still do well."

NSW DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE RESULTS ROUND 2

UNDER 13

Schofields Scorpions 3	Dulwich Hill 0
Mt Pritchard 1	Ryde City 3
Illawarra Lions 8	Rockdale City 0
Stanmore 3	Mt Druitt 5
Camden Tigers 2	Parramatta City 1
Hurstville City 1	MSC Liverpool 1
Hawkesbury City 0	Granville Assn 4

UNDER 14

Schofields Scorpions 1	Dulwich Hill 1
Mt Pritchard 0	Ryde City 0
Illawarra Lions 0	Rockdale City 2
Stanmore 0	Mt Druitt 1
Camden Tigers 3	Parramatta City 0
Hurstville City 2	MSC Liverpool 1
Hawkesbury City 1	Granville Assn 4

UNDER 15

Schofields Scorpions 4	Dulwich Hill 3
Mt Pritchard 3	Ryde City 0
Illawarra Lions 4	Rockdale City 2
Stanmore 1	Mt Druitt 1
Camden Tigers 7	Parramatta City 0
Hurstville City 0	MSC Liverpool 1
Hawkesbury City 2	Granville Assn 3

UNDER 17

Schofields Scorpions 0	Dulwich Hill 1
Mt Pritchard 1	Ryde City 4
Illawarra Lions 1	Rockdale City 0
Stanmore 0	Mt Druitt 3
Camden Tigers 4	Parramatta City 1
Hurstville City 1	MSC Liverpool 3
Hawkesbury City 3	Granville Assn 0

PAT FRASER REAL ESTATE
Sold on Service

THE NSL BIG GAME:
Brisbane Strikers v South Melbourne at Ballymore Oval Saturday 23 March

SOUTH Melbourne's late assault on the National League title continues at Brisbane this weekend when the lads from Victoria take on the Strikers.

Fourth-placed Brisbane sit just three points ahead of a rejuvenated South, whose recent performances have been nothing short of phenomenal.

South last Saturday demolished arch-rivals Olympic Sharks to win bragging rights within the Greek community and that 3-0 dusting has sent shivers down the collective spines of the rest of the pack vying for the Top Six.

So exceptional was South's first half display against the Sharks that they could easily have doubled the scoreline.

South was second bottom of the league at the start of January, but has turned its season around with an unbeaten run which now stretches to 10 games.

The juggernaut will certainly have those in the top six looking nervously over their shoulders.

In reality, the game was won by halftime in a first 45 minutes bristling with class and orchestrated from start to finish by South's inspirational skipper Paul Trimboli.

Trimboli had a hand in both first half goals, scoring the opener by beating two defenders and coolly slotting home in the 38th minute.

The former Socceroo set up the second on the stroke of halftime, picking up a cross from Con Boutsianis, then playing a neat square ball across goal for midfielder Ray Sekulovski to smash home.

South should have been at least ahead by four at oranges.

But South eased off the pedal in the second half and was content to let the Sharks come forward, then hit them on the counter-attack.

The Sydneysiders looked dispirited after their first half bashing and despite having several half chances in the second 45 minutes, rarely threatened.

Much of that was due to the outstanding work of South centre-half Mehmet Durakovic, who pulled off several crucial intercepts and marshalled his defence perfectly.

South eventually sealed the victory with a deserved third goal - Vaughan Coveny finishing off a deft passing move in the 89th minute.

The win takes South into sixth place on goal difference ahead of Northern Spirit, who drew 1-1 with Sydney United on Sunday.

With just one win in the last four weeks and with the congestion at the top of the table, Brisbane is in real danger of not making the cut for the Finals.

Should they lose this one - and victory is no sure thing - then their chances of picking up the pieces in the remaining rounds would appear to be slender at best.

Last week's humiliating 3-1 defeat at tail-draggers Wollongong did nothing to improve morale and coach John Kosmina has a major job on his hands to salvage what started out to be a brilliant season.

Possible Lineups
Brisbane Strikers:
1 J Kearton (gk) 2 R Alagich 3 S Stefanutto 4 J McKain 6 P Grierson 7 F Rech 8 A Webber 9 P Foster 11 J Carbone 15 M McKay 18 L Drake Subs: 10 K Trajanovski 16 Ronnie McQuilter 17 M Baird 20 C Baldock (gk)

Players to Watch: Rech, Trajanovski

South Melbourne: 1 M Petkovic (gk) 2 S Iosifidis 3 F De Amicis 4 M Durakovic 7 S Panopoulos 8 V Coveny 9 P Trimboli 12 R Sekulovski 16 M Murdocca 19 P Kisnorbo 25 C Boutsianis Subs: 10 P Buljan 21 V Lia 26 N Sabljak 23 E Galekovic (gk)

Players to Watch: Trimboli, Boutsianis

X-Factor: South Melbourne is on a roll: 10 games, 10 wins and with plenty more to come. Such momentum is very, very difficult to stop and we can't imagine Brisbane being the team to do so.

Prediction: South by two

South coach Eddie Krncevic

SOCCER TODAY every Thursday

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE PREVIEWS

Newcastle United v Football Kingz at EnergyAustralia Stadium Friday 22 March

NEWCASTLE'S last minute escape against the Glory last week is sure to add to their confidence going into this one.

A game which on paper at least the United side should have no trouble winning.

The Kingz can't take a trick and unless they can turn around their dismal defence guys like Middleby and Griffiths will have a field day.

Moreira has only played a bit part since joining from City, and Crook could give him more playing time in this match.

Possible line-ups

Newcastle: 1 Daniel Beltrame (gk) 3 Andrew Roberts 4 Chris Zoricich 6 Matthew Bingley 8 Mark Wilson 9 Joel Griffiths 11 Peter Tsekenis 13 Milan Blagojevic 16 Joseph Schirripa 22 Robbie Middleby 25 Alex Moreira Subs: 7 Travis Dodd 17 Esala Masi 20 Bradley Swancott (gk)

Players to watch: Blagojevic, Moreira

Kingz FC: 1 Michael Theoklitos (gk) 4 Levent Osman 6 George Goutzioulis 9 Paul Urlovic 11 Andrew Vlahos 12 Heremaia Ngata 13 Jeffrey Campbell 14 John Markovski 15 Mark Burton 22 Campbell Banks 24 Chris Jackson 25 Sean Douglas Subs: 2 Jonathon Perry 15 Mark Burton 19 Hiroshi Miyazawa 26 Scott Bishop (gk)

Players to watch: Theoklitos, Banks

X-Factor: It's been a hard season for the Kiwis, there only respite is knowing that there's only a few more games left.

Prediction: Newcastle by a few

Adelaide City v Perth Glory at Hindmarsh Stadium Friday 22 March

CITY were unlucky away to Marconi last week and there are signs that with a few more games under their belts City's youngsters will do a lot better next season.

A proud club, having the wooden spoon go alongside championship records will not sit well with the foundation club, so expect them to take the battle to the league leaders.

The Glory are the quickest side in the league on the counter though, so the signs are there that if the Force's midfield and defence aren't on alert, there could be a goal-rush.

Possible line-ups

Perth: 1 Jason Petkovic (gk) 5 Craig Deans 6 Gareth Naven 7 Scott Miller 8 Brad Maloney 10 Bobby Despotovski 12 Bradley Hassell 16 Damian Mori 17 Gary Faria 18 Shane Pryce 23 David Tarka Subs: 11 Michael Garcia 22 Antonio Naglieri 26 Nick Mrdja 30 Vince Matassa (gk)

Players to watch: Miller, Garcia

Adelaide City: 1 Adrian Cagalj (gk) 3 Iain Fyfe 4 Ante Kovacevic 7 Lucas Pantelis 8 Carl Veart 9 Robert Saraceno 10 Aurelio Vidmar 12 Scott Tunbridge 13 Kristian Rees 18 Ivan Karlovic 23 Nick Budin Subs: 14 Aaron Goulding 21 Adriano Pellegrino 20 Daniel Godley (gk)

Players to watch: Rees, Goulding

X-Factor: Complacency is something we haven't seen from the Glory this season and they will need to maintain that if they want all three points against a City side that will come to play.

Prediction: Glory in a close one

Parramatta Power v Sydney United at Parramatta Stadium Saturday 23 March

THE Power shocked everyone with their demolition job of the Kingz last week, and still with a small sniff of the finals will be playing the same positive style at home against United.

Going with a much younger lineup paid dividends last week and Mitchell is expected to maintain that youthfulness against a United side that is also chock-full of youngsters.

A match that could go either way, with neither having anything to lose could well provide some entertainment.

Mendez will be looking to put on another show, whilst the Power will use the width with guys like Elrich and Langdon whipping them in.

Possible line-ups:

Power: 20 Liam Reddy (gk) 2 David Barrett 5 Alex Tobin 7 Wayne O'Sullivan 11 Damien Brown 16 Brett Holman 21 Ahmad Elrich 22 Joe Vrkic 24 Steve Eagleton 27 Adam Kwasnik 28 Peter Bennett

Subs: 8 Matthew Thompson 15 Bradley Groves 19 John Buonavoglia 30 Andrew Carman (gk)

Players to watch: Holman, Vrkic

Sydney United: 28 Vilson Knezevic (gk) 6 Michael Cunico 8 Ante Moric 9 Gabriel Mendez 12 Brendan Santalab (-75') 13 Ante Deur 14 Goran Talevski 16 Commins Menapi 17 Paul Bilokapic 23 Michael Cindric 24 Sebastian Sinozic Subs: 15 Aytec Genc 18 Daniel Watkins 22 Milan Bosnar 1 Steven Minovski (gk)

Players to watch: Cindric, Sinozic

X-Factor: Always plenty of feeling between the two sides, the referee will need to keep things under control or both sides could finish with less men then what they started with.

Prediction: Draw

Olympic Sharks v Marconi Stallions at Toyota Park Sunday 24 March

TRADITIONALLY a match that would've drawn a massive crowd, the Sharks though will be more concerned with grabbing the three points to keep in the race for second spot.

Stallions striker Royce Brownlie can't stop scoring, and his goal-scoring feats have seen him motor up the goal-scoring charts, to be within the top ten scorers in the league.

He will be matched by Olympics own goal-scoring ace Milicic who looks set to make a welcome return back to the starting eleven.

Olympic have too many options through midfield and only poor finishing will stop them from getting a win at home.

Prediction: Sharks return to win

Melbourne Knights v Wollongong Wolves at Knights Stadium Sunday 24 March

THE Wolves pulled off the upset of the round last week knocking off top-two aspirants the Strikers. For one of the few times this season the Wollongong side played with cohesion and looked confident on the ners circle

Possible line ups

Olympic: 1 Clint Bolton (gk) 2 Stephen Laybutt 7 Lindsay Wilson 8 Tom Pondeljak 10 Troy Halpin 11 Jade North 16 Jeromy Harris 19 Ante Milicic 23 Andrew Packer 27 Hiroyuki Ishida 28 Ante Juric Subs: 6 Wayne Srhoj 12 Elias Augerinos 17 Fred Agius 20 Glen Moss (gk)

Players to watch: North, Bolton

Stallions: 1 Michael Turnbull (gk) 2 Michael Beauchamp 4 Angelo Costanzo 5 Dominic Longo 6 Christian Care 7 Brendan Renaud 10 John Maisano 12 Steven Bozinovski 13 Shane Webb 15 Royce Brownlie 22 Alex Brosque Subs: 8 Grant Last 11 Norman Tome 17 James Afkos 30 Bob Catlin (gk)

Players to watch: Brosque, Renaud

X-Factor: Turnbull has been in strong form for the Stallions this season and will need all of his skill and ability to keep out a hungry Sharks outfit.

Prediction: Draw

ball.

Another plus was the form of its youngsters in Wells and Austin.

The week off probably came at the wrong time for the Knights as they look to continue on their roll and along with neighbours South look to be the competition's dark horse.

The Knights though will need to tighten up at the back, and this one has all the makings of a goal-fest.

Possible line ups

Knights: 30 Darren McGrath (gk) 3 Rodrigo Vargas 4 Sasa Ognenovski 5 Steve Horvat 6 Andrew Marth 8 Kresimir Marusic 9 Joel Porter 10 Antonio Da Costa 16 Alex Kiratzoglou 18 Andy Vargas 25 Ivo De Jesus; Subs: 2 Joey Rajher 11 Xhezair Sulemani 13 Ivan Jolic 1 Martin John (gk)

Players to watch: Marth, Vargas

Wolves: 1 Dean Anastasiadis (gk) 3 Alvin Ceccoli 4 Robert Stanton 5 David Cervinski 10 Stuart Young 11 Naum Sekulovski 12 Liam Austin 13 Con Anthopoulos 15 David Huxley 23 Dino Mennillo 24 Dustin Wells Subs: 2 George Souris 6 Alex Castro 19 Tony Perinich 30 Scott Whalan (gk)

Players to watch: Cervinski, Anastasiadis

X-Factor: Have had some big clashes in recent years, a game that both sides always respond to and should provide plenty of action.

Prediction: Knights prevail

NSL SCOREBOARD

WOLVES 3

S Young 22'/53' N Sekulovski 84'

STRIKERS 1

K Trajanovski 12'
Referee: Craig Zetter

Wolves: 1 Dean Anastasiadis (gk) 3 Alvin Ceccoli 4 Robert Stanton 5 David Cervinski (-58') 10 Stuart Young 11 Naum Sekulovski (-84') 12 Liam Austin (-81') 13 Con Anthopoulos 15 David Huxley 23 Dino Mennillo 24 Dustin Wells Subs: 2 George Souris (+58') 6 Alex Castro (+81') 19 Tony Perinich (+84') 30 Scott Whalan (gk)
Strikers: 1 Jason Kearton (gk) 2 Richie Alagich (-78') 3 Shane Stefanutto 4 Jon McKain 5 Stuart McLaren 6 Peter Grierson (-24') 7 Fernando Rech 8 Adam Webber 10 Kris Trajanovski 11 John Carbone 15 Matthew McKay Subs: 17 Michael Baird (+24' -63') 18 Lawrence Drake (+78') 19 Joshua Rose (+63') 20 Corey Baldock (gk)
Crowd: 2,372 **Venue:** WIN Stadium

POWER 7

P Bennett 27' B Holman 40'/74'
A Kswasnik 51' A Elrich 61' 88'
M Thompson 84'

KINGZ FC 1

H Ngata 08'
Referee: Con Diomis

Kingz: 1 Michael Theoklitos (gk) 2 Jonathon Perry 6 George Goutzioulis 9 Paul Urlovic 11 Andrew Vlahos 12 Heremaia Ngata 14 John Markovski (-75') 15 Mark Burton (-77') 22 Campbell Banks (-61') 24 Chris Jackson 25 Sean Douglas Subs: 4 Levent Osman (+77') 13 Jeffrey Campbell (+61') 19 Hiroshi Miyazawa (+75') 26 Scott Bishop (gk)
Power: 20 Liam Reddy (gk) 2 David Barrett 5 Alex Tobin 7 Wayne O'Sullivan (-78') 11 Damien Brown 16 Brett Holman 21 Ahmad Elrich 22 Joe Vrkic 24 Steve Eagleton (-79') 27 Adam Kwasnik (-61') 28 Peter Bennett Subs: 8 Matthew Thompson (+78') 15 Bradley Groves (+79') 19 John Buonavoglia (+61') 30 Andrew Carman (gk)
Crowd:2,443 **Venue:** Ericsson Stadium

MARCONI 2

R Brownlie 51'/93'
N Budin 25'

ADELAIDE 1

Referee: Eddie Lennie

Stallions: 1 Michael Turnbull (gk) 2 Michael Beauchamp 4 Angelo Costanzo 5 Dominic Longo 6 Christian Care 8 Grant Last (-46') 10 John Maisano 12 Steven Bozinovski (-68') 13 Shane Webb (-81') 15 Royce Brownlie 22 Alex Brosque Subs: 7 Brendan Renaud (+46') 11 Norman Tome (+81') 17 James Afkos (+68') 30 Bob Catlin (gk)
Force: 1 Adrian Cagalj (gk) 3 Iain Fyfe 4 Ante Kovacevic 7 Lucas Pantelis 8 Carl Veart 9 Robert Saraceno (-79') 10 Aurelio Vidmar 12 Scott Tunbridge 13 Kristian Rees 18 Ivan Karlovic 23 Nick Budin (-69') Subs: 14 Aaron Goulding (+69') 21 Adriano Pellegrino (+79') 20 Daniel Godley (gk)

Crowd: 2,623 **Venue:** Marconi Stadium

PERTH GLORY 2

B Hassell 72' D Mori 87'

NEWCASTLE 2

J Griffiths 09' P Tsekenis 91'
Referee: Brett Hugo

Glory: 1 Jason Petkovic (gk) 5 Craig Deans 6 Gareth Naven 7 Scott Miller 8 Brad Maloney 10 Bobby Despotovski (-76') 12 Bradley Hassell 16 Damian Mori 17 Gary Faria 18 Shane Pryce 23 David Tarka (-78') Subs: 11 Michael Garcia (+78') 22 Antonio Naglieri 26 Nick Mrdja (+76') 30 Vince Matassa (gk)
United: 1 Daniel Beltrame (gk) 2 Michael Prentice (-20') 3 Andrew Roberts 4 Chris Zoricich 6 Matthew Bingley 9 Joel Griffiths 11 Peter Tsekenis 13 Milan Blagojevic 16 Joseph Schirripa (-70') 17 Esala Masi (-82') 22 Robbie Middleby Subs: 7 Travis Dodd (+70') 8 Mark Wilson (+20') 25 Alex Moreira (+82') 20 Bradley Swancott (gk)
Crowd: 12,449 **Venue:** Perth Oval

STH MELBOURNE 3

P Trimboli 38' R Sekulovski 47'
V Coveny 89'

SHARKS 0

Referee: Angelo Nardi

South: 1 Michael Petkovic (gk) 2 Steve Iosifidis 3 Fausto De Amicis 4 Mehmet Durakovic 7 Steve Panopoulos 8 Vaughan Coveny 9 Paul Trimboli (-76') 12 Radomir Sekulovski 16 Massimo Murdocca (-90') 19 Patrick Kisnorbo 25 Con Boutsianis (-72') Subs: 10 Peter Buljan (+72') 21 Vince Lia (+90') 26 Nick Sabljak (+76') 23 Eugen Galekovic (gk)
Sharks: 1 Clint Bolton (gk) 6 Wayne Srhoj (-83') 7 Lindsay Wilson 8 Tom Pondeljak 9 Dylan Macallister (-69') 10 Troy Halpin 23 Andrew Packer 24 Andrew Durante 25 Zenon Caravella (-69') 27 Hiroyuki Ishida 28 Ante Juric Subs: 12 Elias Augerinos (+83') 16 Jeromy Harris (+69') 17 Fred Agius (+69') 30 Brett Hughes (gk)

Crowd: 8,594 **Venue:** Bob Jane Stadium

SYDNEY UTD 1

G Mendez 76'

SPIRIT 1

P Cardozo 27'
Referee: Mark Shield

Sydney United: 28 Vilson Knezevic (gk) 6 Michael Cunico (-46') 8 Ante Moric (-60') 9 Gabriel Mendez 12 Brendan Santalab (-75') 13 Ante Deur 15 Aytec Genc 16 Commins Menapi 17 Paul Bilokapic 23 Michael Cindric 24 Sebastian Sinozic Subs: 14 Goran Talevski (+46') 18 Daniel Watkins (+75') 22 Milan Bosnar (+60') 1 Steven Minovski (gk)
Spirit: 1 Lupce Acevski (gk) 3 Simon Bell 4 Noel Spencer 5 Robert Trajkovski 8 Craig Foster 10 Pablo Cardozo 12 John Hutchinson (-59') 13 Marcus Stergiopoulos 14 Michael Cartwright 18 Robert Enes 19 Ryan Griffiths (-72')
Subs: 7 Andy McDermott 16 Stephen Dobbie (+72') 21 Adam Griffiths (+59') 30 Jacob Rex (gk)

Crowd: 2,280 **Venue:** Sydney United Sports Centre

KNIGHTS

BYE

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE:
Standings at Round 23

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Perth Glory	21	15	5	1	48	20	50
2 Newcastle United	22	9	11	2	30	20	38
3 Olympic Sharks	21	11	3	7	29	18	36
4 Brisbane Strikers	21	9	6	6	36	29	33
5 Melbourne Knights	21	10	2	9	35	33	32
6 South Melbourne	21	8	6	7	23	19	30
7 Northern Spirit	22	8	6	8	29	35	30
8 Parramatta Power	22	8	4	10	29	30	28
9 Marconi Stallions	21	7	5	9	26	29	26
10 Wollongong Wolves	21	6	7	8	23	30	25
11 Sydney United	21	5	5	11	24	33	20
12 Adelaide City Force	21	3	7	11	23	35	16
13 Kingz FC	21	3	5	13	25	49	14

LEADING SCORERS

17	MORI Damian	Perth Glory
13	FOSTER Paul	Brisbane Strikers
12	CARDOZO Pablo	Spirit
11	DESPOTOVSKI Bobby	Perth Glory
10	MILICIC Ante	Olympic Sharks
10	PORTER Joel	Knights
9	BROWNLIE Royce	Marconi
9	DA COSTA Antonio	Knights
9	GRIFFITHS Joel	Newcastle
9	RECH Fernando	Brisbane Strikers
8	URLOVIC Paul	Kingz FC
7	MALONEY Brad	Perth Glory
7	MENAPI Commins	Sydney United
7	MOREIRA Alex	Newcastle
7	TUNBRIDGE Scott	Adelaide City
7	YOUNG Stuart	Wolves
6	MAISANO John	Marconi
5	BUONAVOGLIA John	Power
5	CERVINSKI Adrian	Spirit
5	MASI Esala	Newcastle
5	PONDELJAK Tom	Olympic
4	BAIRD Michael	Strikers
4	BOUTSIANIS Con	South
4	CARBONE John	Strikers
4	DE JESUS Ivo	Knights
4	MACALLISTER Dylan	Olympic
4	MIDDLEBY Robbie	Newcastle
4	NGATA Heremaia	Kingz FC
4	TRAJANOVSKI Kris	Brisbane Strikers
4	TRIMBOLI Paul	South
4	VLAHOS Andy	Kingz FC
3	ARAMBASIC Zlatko	Power
3	BACAK Joe	South
3	CARLE Nick	Olympic
3	COVENY Vaughan	South
3	DEUR Ante	Sydney United
3	GOUTZIOULIS George	Kingz FC
3	GULESSARIAN Kevo	Stallions
3	HARNWELL Jamie	Perth Glory
3	HOLMAN Brett	Power
3	HUTCHINSON John	Spirit
3	MARTH Andrew	Knights
3	MCBREEN Daniel	Newcastle
3	NORTH Jade	Olympic
3	Sekulovski Naum	Wolves
3	TOME Norman	Marconi

THE BRIAN BROWN COLUMN

What does it take to be an excellent coach?

WITH three games left in the home and away season of the New South Wales Premier League, it's probably somewhat of an achievement that nine out of the 12 starting coaches still have their jobs.

St. George brought in Manny Spanoudakis, Canterbury have brought in Laki Konistis and Bankstown have brought in Ljube Jancev.

The clubs generally speaking have shown some loyalty and common sense in supporting the people they have employed.

How many of us will be there next year?

I would love to be a fly on the wall in at some of the interviews held by the board and committees of clubs when employing coaches.

One of the things that must be considered is how much footballing knowledge these committee and board members have.

Most of them only care about their own club, and are just purely football supporters.

I'm not criticising their role within the organisation, just making the point that they need to identify the type of person who will suit their club and that this person must meet certain personal requirements.

It can be hard for these administrators to make such a decision when their knowledge is obviously limited.

So what qualifications does are coach need to have then?

Does he need to have played at a high level?

That would help but it isn't crucial.

Does he need to have all his coaching badges?

He should have experience, but where did he get that experience? How did he learn?

And who did he learn from?

All these questions must be addressed during the selection process.

In my opinion the most important thing a coach needs at a Premier League level, is management and people skills.

Selection of the correct support staff and players is another feature that is high on the list of priorities.

You need to be able to communicate and understand your staff, finding out what they are like as people, what they like and don't like, how they handle pressure, will they get along with the players and rest of the staff?

Probably the most important thing to look for is their commitment to the game.

Are they just in the game for the money?

Or will they have fun and enjoy themselves?

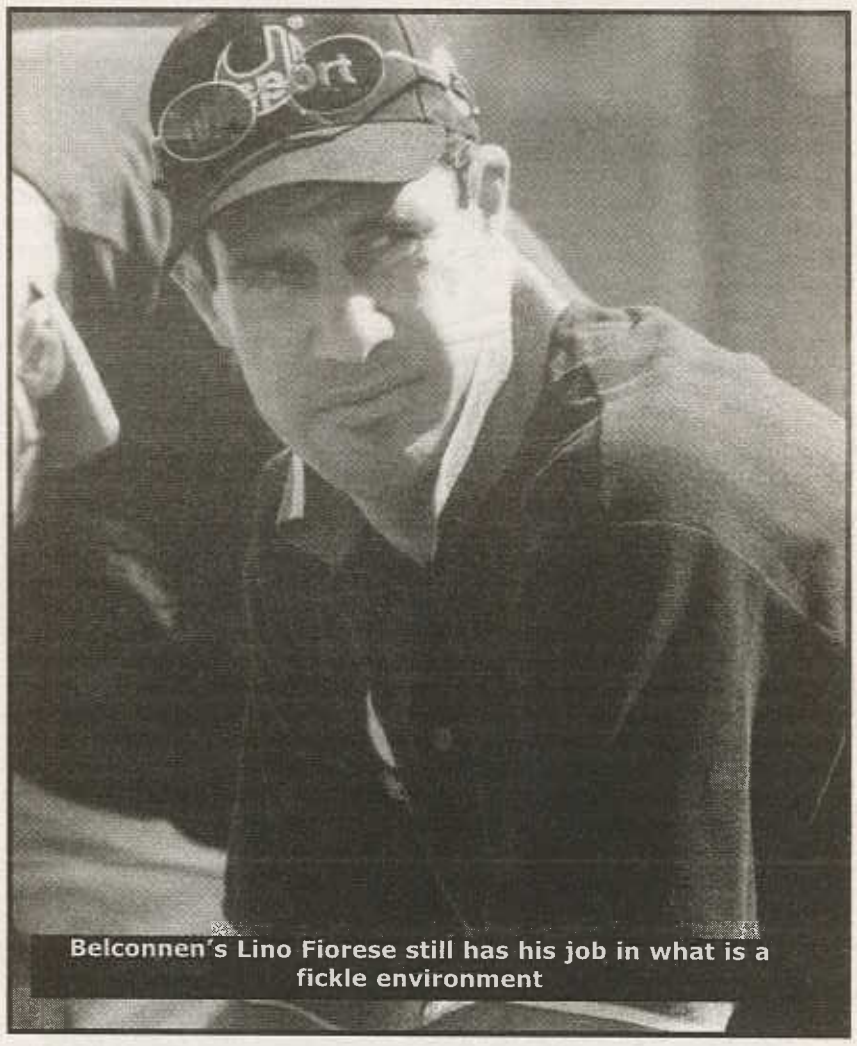
Are they winners?

When it comes to actual coaching, players who have reached a Premier League level, shouldn't need to be coached on the basics of the game.

That is left to junior coaches, although I do question what a lot of coaches do with players up to the age of 16, as we still come across players who don't understand the basic principles of how to attack or defend.

Players at this level need to be organised to play as part of the team and managed to perform to their best every week.

How many coaches are given the job of managing a football team and its staff without having never managed anything other than themselves prior to getting the job?



Belconnen's Lino Fiorese still has his job in what is a fickle environment

There are many great players who have become coaches and have failed in the job because they weren't ready and didn't have experience managing people.

I think it's crucial that before Boards or Committees blame or sack the coaches they should look at why they gave them the job in the first place.

Brian Brown this season coached the NSW state team and heads NSW Premier League side Blacktown City Demons.

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE PREVIEW
THE BIG GAME

Belconnen Blue Devils v Fairfield Bulls at Hawker Oval Saturday 23 March

WITH only three rounds remaining this match could well decide who makes it to the post season, and who heads down to the local bar to drown their sorrows after a season that could've been.

The dreaded trip down the Hume Highway, has cost plenty of sides this season and the Bulls will have to come out fresh and firing if they want to bring something back from this trip.

It looks to be an even money contest with the Bulls hitting form in recent weeks. Three successive wins and the ominous form of front pair Borg and Hoenselaars will see the Edensor-Park based side head-into the match full of confidence.

The Blue-Devils on the other are coming off a hard-fought loss to league leaders the Parramatta Eagles in a match that has seen them slip out of the Top Five.

Despite the loss the Canberra side has been consistent but with both the Bulls and the Blacktown City Demons in white-hot form, the Blue-Devils will need to take their game to the next level if they want to make the finals.

A win at home could well provide them with that tonic.

The form of Shane Lyons and former Eastern Pride player Mike Katz could well hold the key for Belconnen.

Daniel Macor will also be looking for more minutes and a return to his goal-scoring touch which was evident earlier on in the season.

The last time these two sides met Belconnen came away from the Ninevah Sports Ground with a point thanks to Steve Lazzari who equalised in the final minutes ofn play.

Not for the first time this season, the Bulls were denied all three points in the dying stages, and coach Craig Sharpley is sure to look back on these matches with distaste should the Fairfield side not qualify for the finals.

It will be a battle of two contrasting styles with the solid defence of the Blue-Devils up against the flair and pace of a strong Bulls attack.

The Blue Devils have the third best defence in the league whilst the Bulls have the fourth best attack.

Adding to their strike power has been mid-season recruit Nick Bosevski who's combination with Maric and hard-working Harrison has given the Bulls a stronger resolve in the middle of the park.

Tony Giannasca has been in fine form between the sticks for Belconnen and he will need to maintain that consistency to keep out what's sure to be more than just a few flying bullets.

It has all the makings for a tense and hard-fought match, which will no doubt be very physical. Finals football looks to have arrived a few weeks early and with so much on the line there should be very little-separating the two sides.

The home advantage could well be the deciding factor.

Squads

Belconnen Blue Devils: 1. Anthony Giannasca, 2. Toplica Popovich, 3. Matthew Cachia, 4. Elliot Zwangobani, 5. Nic Purdue, 6. Shane Lyons, 8. Michael Katz, 9. John Rakic, 10. Daniel Macor, 11. David Arranz, 12. Jaime Mauro, 13. Stewart Camara, 14. Marko Perinovic, 15. Adrian Dowling, 16. Oscar Zamora, 17. Stephen Kemp, 18. David Milin, 19. Daniel Camara, 20. Rade Kosanovic.

Coach: Lino Fiorese

Players to watch: Camara, Zwangobani

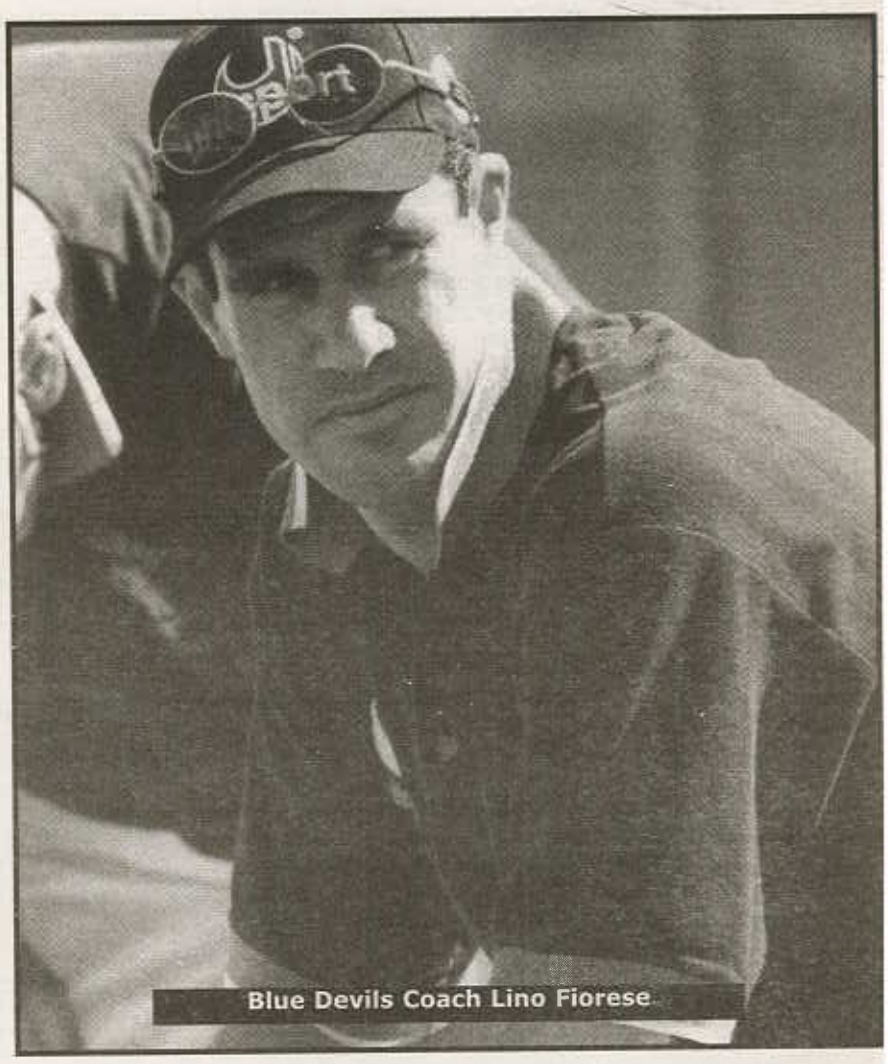
Fairfield Bulls: 1. Frank Mikuletic, 2. Adam Snyder, 3. Mathew Dihm, 4. Paul Bourke, 6. Paul Richardson, 7. Ray Younis, 8. Stewart Van Bentum, 9. Marc Hoenselaars, 10. Mathew Borg, 11. Richard Harrison, 12. Tom Maric, 14. Ismael Arrarte, 15. Nick Bosevski, 16. Andy Ravanello, 17. Craig Sharpley, 19. Jason Connolly, 20. Ali Akbal,

Coach: Craig Sharpley

Players to watch: Bosevski, Harrison

X-Factor: The midfield battle will hold the key, with the Blue Devils having to inhibit effective distribution to the Bulls front two.

Prediction: Bulls scrape last-minute equaliser.


Blue Devils Coach Lino Fiorese

Meanwhile, in other games this week, Canterbury Marrickville host-traditional rivals the Saints who are coming off a strong win against the Sharks last week.

The Sharks could well be in for another long day when they clash with the White-Eagles looking to re-group after last weeks first home loss of the season.

The Demons will be looking to continue their good form when they meet Bankstown at Gabbie.

The Tigers travel to the Central Coast and league leaders the Parramatta Eagles are at home to Penrith in a game they should win.

NSW SUPER LEAGUE PREVIEW

THE BIG GAME

Manly-Warringah Dolphins v Fraser Park Jets at Cromer Park Saturday 23 March

BOTH sides finished with disappointing draws in their respective first round matches and will certainly be looking to register their first win of the season.

Two clubs with talented squads and high expectations, the Dolphins and the Jets have the depth and ability to be up there when it counts at the business end of the year.

Defending Champions the Dolphins will take some time to settle into the league, and with first time coach Robbie Slater pulling the strings will rely on old heads in Berry and Moss to maintain stability.

The addition of some fresh local talent also looks to have given the Dolphins more enthusiasm, although they have fairly large shoes to fill, in the likes of James Stubbs-Mills, Kelvin Foster and Adam Snyder.

The Jets were unlucky not to take all three points against a battling Hajduk side last week, and were hurt by not being able to field their strongest side.

After a mountain of recruiting in the off-season, the Jets were unable to show off their new imports due to player clearances. No doubt they will be hoping to rectify the problem in time for this weeks clash.

Keep an eye on the Jets Tony Faria, with the former Northern Spirit and Dolphins player keen to put in a big one against his former side.

He will be countered by former Jets player Damien Rosenthal donning the Manly colours as well as former NSL star Hamilton Thorp who has been one of the biggest off-season buys.

The Dolphins are notoriously slow starters, but consistency is one thing the Manly side has prided itself on in recent years and they will be looking at maintaining their daunting home record at Cromer Park.

The Jets for the second year in a row have been billed as potential champions and following on from last year's inconsistency have a lot to prove.

John Sentas is an experienced coach at this level, and his battle of tactics with the former Socceroo Slater will capture plenty of interest.

Fans are hoping to see Slater have a run, but he is being hampered by a back injury.

However, a sizeable crowd should be on hand to see the new look Dolphins even if Slater only has a role from the sidelines.

Fraser Park was one of the worst-traveled sides last season: losing eight out of 11 games on the road.

Sentas will be making sure they take their travel-sickness pills before the match, to ensure that those same results don't occur again this season.

NSW's under 19s player Daniel Borg will be another to keep an eye on with the former Parramatta Eagles player tipped to have a big season.

Jets-Players to watch:
Candelori, Silva

Dolphins-Players to watch:
Townsend, Berry

X-Factor: Dolphins have struggled through pre-season so there is no better time to play them then now, as they're only going to get better.

In other games this week, Dulwich Hill take on last seasons improved wooden spooners MSC Liver pool. Last week's winners AC United host newcomers Sydney University who pushed high-flyers Rockdale all the way last round.

Fellow newcomers Ryde City play their first home game of the season when they meet the ambitious Stanmore Hawks.

Impressive winners the Hurstville City Crescent Star take on Rockdale in what should be another entertaining clash and the Tommy McCulloch led Wanderers are at home to the Macarthur Rams looking to atone for last week's loss.

ROUND 1 RESULTS:

Macarthur 0	Hurstville City 2
Fraser Park 1	Hajduk W 1
MSC Liverpool 0	Ryde C 0
Stanmore 0	Manly-Wgah 0
Rockdale 2	Sydney Uni 1
AC United 2	Dulwich Hill 1

THIS WEEK:
Manly-Wgah v Fraser Park
Dulwich Hill v MSC Liverpool
AC United v Sydney Uni
Ryde City v Stanmore
Hayduk W v Macarthur
Hurstville v Rockdale

Stallions Premier Youth teams off to a flying start

The Marconi Stallions have kicked-off their Premier Youth League season in fine style with quite a number of their squads looking strong early on.

A solid pre-season which included a well-spirited charity tournament against AC United, has seen the Stallions become one of the sides to watch this season.

Marconi youth co-ordinator Lisa Severin told *Soccer Today* that the Foti Shield "was just a brilliant day".

"We raised over $6000 and the spirit that was shown on the day made it really enjoyable for everyone involved."

The 13s have looked particularly impressive early on with strong wins over Sutherland and the Central Coast.

Consisting of a number of the boys that were part of last season's Grand Final winning 12s side, the 13s sit two points clear at the top of the table as the only side to win both their matches.

"It's a very good side, and we've added four very good new players, on top of the boys from the 12s last year," Severin says.

"They are shaping up well, and are adapting to the new style and level of competition.

"They are coached by the manager of the Colts side, so he's working them hard."

The 14s are also undefeated early on and are coached by Pat Marando, who has formed a close-knit side that will challenge the likes of Spirit and Blacktown.

"Pat is very dedicated and really does put in a lot of effort," states Severin.

"He has a very good rapport with the boys as most of our coaches do.

"All the kids get along and it really is a good atmosphere.

"People say that the most important thing is success, but I prefer to see the boys enjoying themselves and having a good time.

"There's a good buzz around the place at the moment, and it's once you have happy kids that's when winning comes."

The Marconi 15s have given some indication that they won't be holding back in attack this season, so far scoring seven goals in their two matches.

Equal leaders with the Wollongong Wolves and Olympic Sharks, the 15s have so far shown plenty of promise.

"They're a very good side and have picked up a few good players," Severin comments.

"We've had a couple of players from that side who had left the club, but have returned which is always good.

"They've realised that the grass is not always greener on the other side, and we're more than happy to have them back.

"We're all very close and very much a family oriented club, that's one of our strengths."

Severin also paid tribute to Vince Foti the director in charge of junior soccer at the club, who has taken an active role and interest in the game at a youth level.

The 17s so far are winless but with state coach John Alvarez at the helm, it mightn't be too long before they turn it around.

Young Stallions Christian Sencion, and Jason Kochou left this week as part of the ITC squad heading off to Europe to compete in a tournament, led by experienced youth coach Kelly Cross.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE RESULTS

ROUND 2

UNDER 13

Wollongong 0	Leichhardt 1
Manly-Warringah 1	Southern Branch 2
Olympic Sharks 0	Penrith 0
Sutherland 1	Sydney United 0
Central Coast 0	Marconi 1
Northern Spirit 3	St. George 2

UNDER 14

Wollongong 0	Leichhardt 1
Manly-Warringah 3	Southern Branch 2
Olympic Sharks 0	Penrith 1
Sutherland 0	Sydney United 0
Northern Spirit 3	St. George 0
Blacktown 3	Parramatta 0

UNDER 15

Wollongong 5	Leichhardt 1
Manly-Warringah 0	Southern Branch 1
Olympic Sharks 10	Penrith 0
Sutherland 1	Sydney United 1
Northern Spirit 2	St. George 0
Blacktown 1	Parramatta 1

UNDER 17

Wollongong 0	Leichhardt 1
Manly-Warringah 1	Southern Branch 2
Olympic Sharks 0	Penrith 2
Sutherland 1	Sydney United 4
Northern Spirit 4	St. George 0
Blacktown 1	Parramatta 0

SOCCER TODAY!

on sale every Thursday at newsagencies throughout Australia

Bankstown City Lions hit early pay dirt in NSW Super Youth League

YOU could be forgiven for thinking that last week's Super Youth League matches between the Bankstown City Lions and Nepean Association were played at Jensen Park, rather than Nepean's home ground at Cook Park.

With every tackle and every whistle the Bankstown supporters would go up as one, and they far outweighed and vocally drowned out their counterparts.

They were silenced early on however, with the Nepean under 13s side proving too strong for the cubs from Bankstown running out emphatic 8-0 victors.

That win sees the Nepean side sit atop of the competition ladder and follows on from their 3-0 victory over Hills United the week before.

For the Bankstown 13s they can only move up, and the result against Nepean probably wasn't a true reflection of Bankstown's ability, but more like a win that highlights just how strong Nepean's 13s side really is.

The 14s clash was probably the most entertaining match of the day and a game that featured plenty of end to end action.

With the scores locked at 1-1 Nepean, somewhat against the run of play, scored what looked like being the decisive goal.

The Cubs continued to apply the blow-torch to the oppositions defence and were unlucky on more than just a few occassions not to score. With only ten minutes remaining they were rewarded for their pressure with the goal that leveled the game at 2-2, and saw both teams split the points.

Both 14s sides are now locked on four points after two rounds, with Nepean in fifth spot with a one goal differential over Bankstown who are in sixth. The Cubs 15s were looking to continue on from their steady 2-1 victory over Eastern Suburbs with another strong showing here.

It didn't take them long to assert their dominance scoring after 15 minutes. A lop-sided result always looked on the cards early on as the Nepean side struggled to maintain any possession, against a skilful and pacy Bankstown outfit. Two more second half goals saw the Cubs take a 3-0 lead into the break, and they were never going to be headed in the second half. In hot conditions the introduction of the unlimited interchange rule, from 11s to 15s appears to be a positive change and certainly allowed for players who appeared to be more than just a little fatigued to take a break. Bankstown's 15s sit equal top of the table with Newcastle, both clubs having a perfect record in the 2002 season. Their 17s are also sitting pretty at the top with 4-0 and 3-1 wins under their belt. In what appears to be a tight 17s competition there are five undefeated sides, while next week's clash between Bankstown and Hills United will see the perfect run of one of these clubs come to an end. The Cubs have made a positive start to the Super Youth League competition and with plenty of matches still to come there promises to be even more excitement.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE RESULTS

ROUND 2

UNDER 13	
Nepean 8	Bankstown 0
Macarthur 3	Hills United 0
Bonnyrigg 2	Blacktown Assn 1
Fairfield 0	Hajduk 3
AC United 2	Mingara 3
Eastern Subs 6	Canterbury 4
Ku-ring-gai 0	Newcastle Utd 1
UNDER 14	
Nepean 2	Bankstown 2
Macarthur 4	Hills United 0
Bonnyrigg 1	Blacktown Assn 5
Fairfield 1	Hajduk 3
AC United 3	Mingara 1
Eastern Subs 4	Canterbury 0
Ku-ring-gai 1	Newcastle Utd 4
UNDER 15	
Nepean 0	Bankstown 4
Macarthur 0	Hills United 1
Bonnyrigg 0	Blacktown Assn 1
Fairfield 3	Hajduk 3
AC United 2	Mingara 4
Eastern Subs 1	Canterbury 2
Ku-ring-gai 1	Newcastle Utd 2
UNDER 17	
Nepean 1	Bankstown 3
Macarthur 0	Hills United 5
Bonnyrigg 0	Blacktown Assn 2
Fairfield 1	Hajduk 5
AC United 1	Mingara 0
Eastern Subs 2	Canterbury 2
Ku-ring-gai 0	Newcastle Utd 4

SOCCER TODAY!

on sale every Thursday at newsagencies throughout Australia

Man United confident Beckham will re-sign

MANCHESTER United chief executive Peter Kenyon said on Tuesday he is "very, very confident" that David Beckham will sign a new contract before the World Cup.

The England captain, whose current contract with Man United runs out in the summer of 2003, has been in negotiations with the Old Trafford club for several months without agreement.

The two sides are reportedly working on a deal worth around STG100,000 ($A286,779) a week. But the stumbling block has been over image rights, the fee that Beckham - English soccer's biggest name - would receive for effectively promoting United off the pitch.

Leading European clubs, notably Inter Milan, would be interested in signing Beckham if he failed to agree to terms with United.

But Kenyon said he expects the deal to be finalised soon.

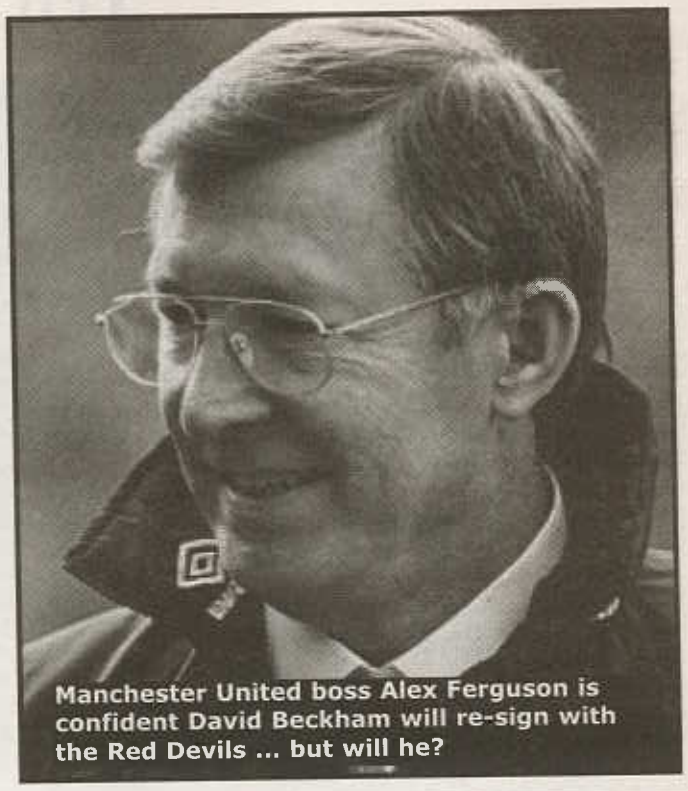
"I am sure we will get it done, hopefully before the end of the season or when he goes to the World Cup," Kenyon told BBC radio.

"We can then enjoy a good run-in and he can enjoy a good World Cup knowing his future is secure and we have secured it.

"There is no such thing as 100 per cent, but I have got to say that we are very, very confident. We have always felt that David wants to remain with us and we want David to remain and that is the great basis for any negotiation and we are confident, and he's confident, that we will complete it.

The next several weeks are so important to the output of our season that we really want to put it behind us as soon as possible and have everybody concentrating on the real job in hand which is picking up some trophies."

AP



Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson is confident David Beckham will re-sign with the Red Devils ... but will he?

Juventus want to play away from home

ITALIAN Serie A giants Juventus are considering playing home matches away from their base in Torino in a bid to galvanise their fans, *Gazzetta dello Sport* reported this week.

The move, which does have precedents in the club's history, comes with fans failing to turn up in large numbers at the unloved Stadio Delle Alpi with individual players constantly barracked and jeered by their own fans.

Juventus have a huge support base all over Italy and beyond and the directors are said to be considering playing at least some games away from Torino.

It is already being suggested that Juve's home leg in the two-legged Italian Cup Final with Parma might be played in Palermo, Sicily.

Gazzetta even suggest Juve may play all next season's fixtures away from Turin. Other potential venues are Reggio Emilia (between Parma and Bologna) and Monza, the town near Milan that is more famous as the home of motor racing.

In the past the 'vecchia signora' (old lady), as Juve are affectionately known, has shown a willingness to play away. In 1999, for example, Juve played all their Intertoto Cup home matches at Cesena.

Juve's honorary president Umberto Agnelli pointed out on Sunday that the club did not get the support it deserved in its home city.

"They turn up in small numbers and are very demanding on the players," said Agnelli. "I don't know if they (the supporters) deserve a great team."

In today's Gazzetta, Juve goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon said he felt more at ease playing away.

"It's terrible seeing individual players being jeered," said Buffon who became the world's most expensive goalkeeper when he left Parma for Juve last summer for $US37 million ($A71m).

"As for me I have never been booed yet but I feel more at home playing away: at least half the crowd is normally for us."

The Stadio Delle Alpi, a vast concrete bowl built for the 1990 World Cup, is widely considered one of the least attractive grounds in football and often only reaches half its 70,000 capacity for league games.

Last weekend, for the 1-0 victory over Verona with Juventus very much in the title race, only 2529 paid on the gate in addition to the season ticket holders.

Many Juve fans are still pining for their former home at the Stadio Communale which was in service until the Delle Alpi was built and which now serves as Juve's training ground.

AFP

SOCCER TODAY!
is produced weekly on Thursdays
by
ROYAL PUBLISHING
Suite 12 3A Railway Pde
Kogarah
NSW 2217
AUSTRALIA

POSTAL ADDRESS:
PO Box 566
Kogarah
NSW 2217
AUSTRALIA

CONTACTS:
Editorial: 02 9588 6533
Advertising: 02 9588 6511
Fax: 02 9588 6500
Email:
royal_publishing@yahoo.com.au

DISTRIBUTION:
WRAPAWAY
02 9550 1622

PUBLISHER:
Derek ROYAL

STAFF JOURNALIST:
Adam LETO

BUSINESS MANAGER & ACCOUNTS:
Angela ROYAL

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING:
Tracie CORBY

PRODUCTION:
Jessica SAYA

COLUMNISTS:
Francis AWARITEFE
Brian BROWN
Jimmy FRASER
Anissa TANN-DARBY
Mr X

CONTRIBUTORS:
Anita BULAN
Taghred CHANDAB
Guy HAND
David MASON
Gary MORETTI
Ted SIMMONS
Reuters, AAP, AP, AFP, DPA

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Tina ASPREA
Mike SNYDER
Agencies

All material appearing in SOCCER TODAY is copyright (unless indicated otherwise) and may not be reproduced or stored in any form without prior written permission from the publisher or copyright owner.
The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of SOCCER TODAY.
© SOCCER TODAY 2002

THE FINAL WHISTLE!

It's tough doing a good job when you're not allowed

IN THE past month I have received several letters complaining about our alleged thin coverage of various competitions in New South Wales.

The youth leagues, the Premier League, etc, etc we were told, were not given enough space.

While all that is fair I would like to address the criticism.

Soccer Today is actively discouraged by the NSW Soccer Federation to cover any football under their jurisdiction.

This includes Premier League, Super League, Federation divisions one to four, women's football and all the NSW youth league competitions.

The state federation through various sources, most notably its resident media liaison person, er spin doctor, does all in its power to disassociate itself from this publication.

Allow me to elaborate on a few examples.

In the lead-up to the Women's National League Grand Final at Parramatta Stadium two weeks ago Soccer Today intended to produce a four-page preview on the game.

It was after all, a national final being played at one of the finest grounds in the country.

Such an occasion deserved media coverage and promotion. At least that's what we thought.

However, we were informed that the NSW Sapphires coach was unavailable, as he has been to this publication for the entire WNSL season.

Apparently the coach's boss - presumably someone in an Ivory Tower at the NSWSF - had given him the hard word.

We were told in no uncertain terms: No quotes. No interviews. Get lost.

So we did get lost and instead of running four pages, we ran two, including of course, our regular column penned by Sapphires skipper Anissa Tann-Darby.

But that's not all.

Certain individuals within the Federation have in the past week or so not only expressed their displeasure at this publication having Anissa as a columnist but it has also targeted another regular columnist whose team happens to be one of the top dogs in the NSW Premier League.

This gentleman was also state coach until a couple of weeks ago.

Just the other day the state federation's spin doctor had the audacity to question this man's integrity because he happens to write a column for us.

One doesn't need to be a genius to work out that the man in question is Brian Brown - one of the most genial and approachable individuals in the game.

Obviously the fact that he is writing for this publication has caused a few heart palpitations within the corridors of power at state headquarters and his recent dumping as state coach seems a little um, shall we say, disturbing.

I'm not suggesting that his role as a columnist for Soccer Today has anything to do with his dumping, but as they say, stranger things have happened and really, nothing surprises me anymore.

But can't the Federation see that Brian's contribution to this publication is in fact free, unpaid promotion for THEM?

However, this same Federation pen pusher has in the past tried to discourage contributors from writing for us. Blatantly said to them: "why do you have to write for THEM?"

THEM being us and not our weekly competitors who happen to be in bed with the NSWSF.

What right does this guy have to tell a journalist or a coach/columnist where his material should be appearing?

He has no right whatsoever and it is this sort of bullshit and blatant bias that goes on behind the scenes that makes the game so chronically sick.

He knows who he is and by now several others within the game will know what he has been up to in recent weeks. And hopefully they will see him for the undesirable that he really is, someone who has blatantly ignored his job description and instead indulged in serious mischief in an effort to undermine this magazine.

Rather than doing his job and providing ALL media with material: not just his favourites - he has been bothering our writers and trying to influence them or should I say, intimidate them, into toeing the Federation line.

However, the buck cannot stop with this individual because he is not a mover or a shaker.

He's probably just a shit-kicker who is being jerked around by his employers.

Well, he and his employers would be well advised to lay off because we have been kept well informed of such blatant breachs of media etiquette.

Such tactics that are obviously designed to rub Soccer Today off the face of the publishing world.

But it won't work. We will just keep doing our own thing with or without assistance from the NSW Soccer Federation. Even if in the near future we don't bother running material on the various competitions run by NSW, there is still plenty in the world game to write about.

Hell, the earth does not revolve around NSW football.

So if we do decide enough is enough and don't bother to run ANY material on NSW football - i.e. we drop them entirely - then don't as you have been, send your emails and letters of complaint to Royal Publishing or Soccer Today. Send them to the state's governing body and get on their case about not promoting the game and not acting in its best interests.

Have a slash at them for trying to run one magazine out of town by not providing them with the same information they provide others.

Should we take the path of ignoring NSW football - and it is a serious consideration as I write this column - the mob out at Parklea will no doubt be rubbing their hands in glee. In some twisted way they will gloat and feel good about themselves for preventing us from providing information to the thousands of kids running around every weekend. For us, that would be a shame but life goes on and besides, soccer is a global sport, not one confined to a solitary state Down Under.

Yours in soccer,
Derek Royal (Publisher)

THE WOMEN'S GAME

Proudly brought to you by SOCCER TODAY

Vibrant, friendly and fun-loving, Rachel has done many things in her life. She has been a cheerleader since the age of 13, making her an eight-year veteran, and she even participated in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. Soccer Today caught up with Rachel at Shark Park ...

Words: Derek Royal
Pictures: Tina Asprea

CAN you imagine what it's like to walk into a packed Stadium during the Olympic Games' Closing Ceremony?

Rachel knows just what it's like after experiencing the moment at the 1996 Games in Atlanta.

"I just broke down and cried," she said.

"I guess the whole moment of walking out into the middle of the stadium and seeing a mass of people overwhelmed me.

"I just cried and cried."

So what was Rachel doing in Atlanta?

more to the point, what was she doing strutting onto the arena at the Games' Closing Ceremony?

Rachel was one of 12 Australian girls selected to perform at the Ceremony, which remians one of the highlights in her life.

"All the schools were notified and girls between 14 and 18 auditioned for the 12 positions," Rachel said.

"All the girls had long hair so they pretty much went for that so I was lucky.

"There were 12 girls and 12 guys and it was a great experience.

Or

"In Atlanta we stayed at the Olympic Village - which was cool - we rehearsed a lot and it was very hot, especially for the guys who had to wear the animal suits.

"I was in a little dress so it was alright.

"We also had a couple of days in LA, went to Disneyland and had an absolute ball.

"So in the end, I got to go to Atlanta for two weeks and as a 14-year-old it was like ... wow, this is fantastic!"

Rachel began cheerleading at the tender age of 13, some eight years ago when she starred for the Cronulla Sharks Mermaids.

The infamous Super League war split the game down the middle and the new governing body implemented a cheerleader age restriction of 18.

"After two years at the Sharks I went to St. George because they weren't in Super League and the Australian Rugby League didn't have any age restrictions," she said.

"Then when the Super League thing collapsed I went back to Cronulla."

So what is it about cheerleading that she most enjoys?

"I always wanted to be performing - I hate rehearsing but I just love showtime," she said.

"I love the football and soccer and the atmosphere is amazing, especially when there's a big crowd and they have fireworks and the whole bit.

"I like the feeling that people want to watch us dance.

"It's just exciting and I can't wait to get out there and do it.

"Its been great having the soccer this season because we normally have six months off and it can be really boring."

When she's not cheerleading, Rachel leads a hectic lifestyle.

The blonde bombshell is currently studying a personal training course at TAFE and while she admits that she struggles to lift an empty barbell, she's not too concerned.

"It doesn't matter because I only have to tell people what to do, I don't actually have to do it," she says with a laugh.

"I also teach dancing at Kirrawee, I work in a surf shop and of course, I do cheer squad."

Rachel was in Year 8 when she first started performing in front of football crowds and while she's just a few months shy of her "Coming of Age" she still loves performing.

"It was different when I first started," she said.

"It wasn't as professional as it is now and we were just girls having a lot of fun.

"I still love it because it's still a whole heap of fun and the girls are really nice.

"So yeah, I still have the same thrill now as I did back then."

And doesn't the beaming smile on Rachel's face just say it all.

Telstra

We're making sure your numbers

work harder

for you.

Numbers are an important part of our everyday life. They help us stay connected and keep in touch. Whether it's your Telstra home phone, mobile or Internet, we're committed to helping you get more out of your numbers. If you'd like to talk to us about how we can help you get more from your numbers, simply call this one - 13 2200 - or visit www.telstra.com or your local Telstra Shop.

OLYMPIC SHARKS

www.olympicsharks.com

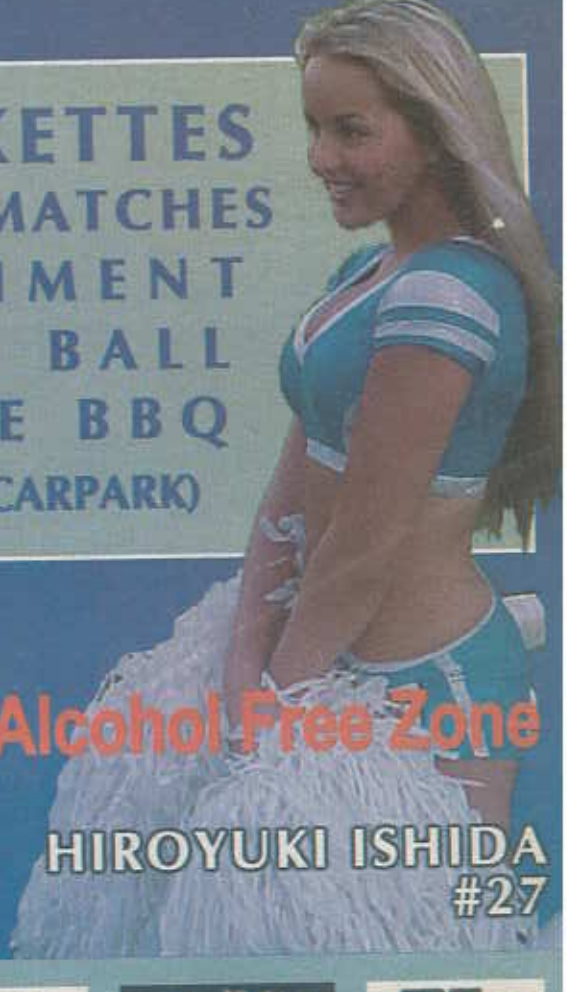
TSUNAMI WARNING: *HIRO* IS COMING

SHARKS vs MARCONI

Sun 24 March - 6pm - Toyota Park

Gates open at 4.30pm. Tickets available at the gate.
Adults $15 - Stu/Con $10 - Children (under 8) Free.

OLYMPIC SHARKETTES
JUNIOR EXHIBITION MATCHES
KIDS ENTERTAINMENT
SHADY HAZE BIG BALL
FREE AFTER GAME BBQ
FREE PARKING (WESTERN CARPARK)



LG Family Hill **Alcohol Free Zone**

HIROYUKI ISHIDA #27

Bank of Cyprus AUSTRALIA

COVO

Ascot CAR RENTAL

STONE AGE

RETRO